I'll Give It My All... Tomorrow

BY SHUNJU AONO

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I'll Give It My All... Tomorrow

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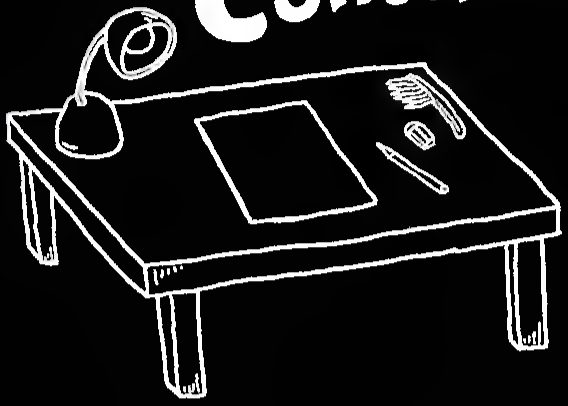

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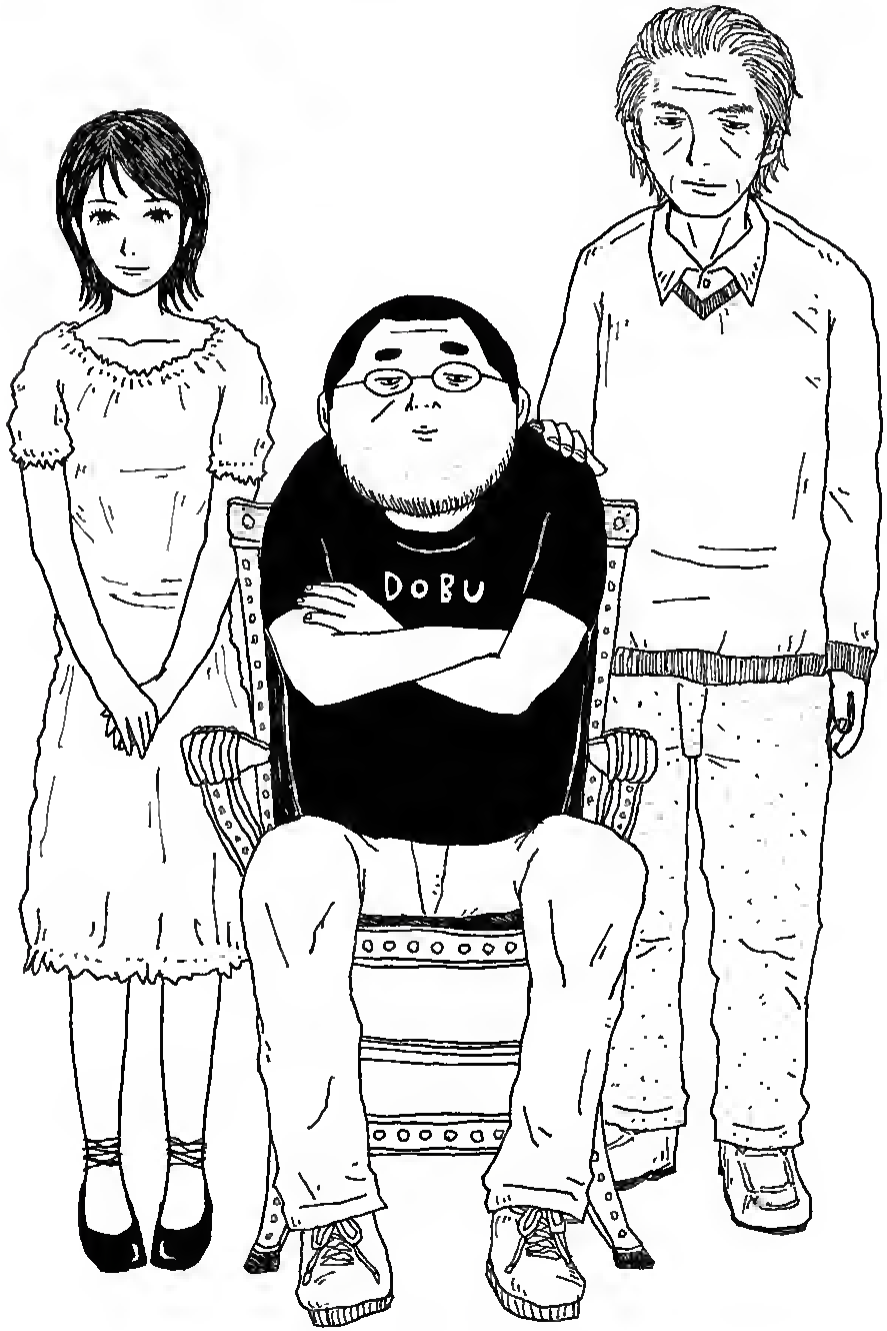
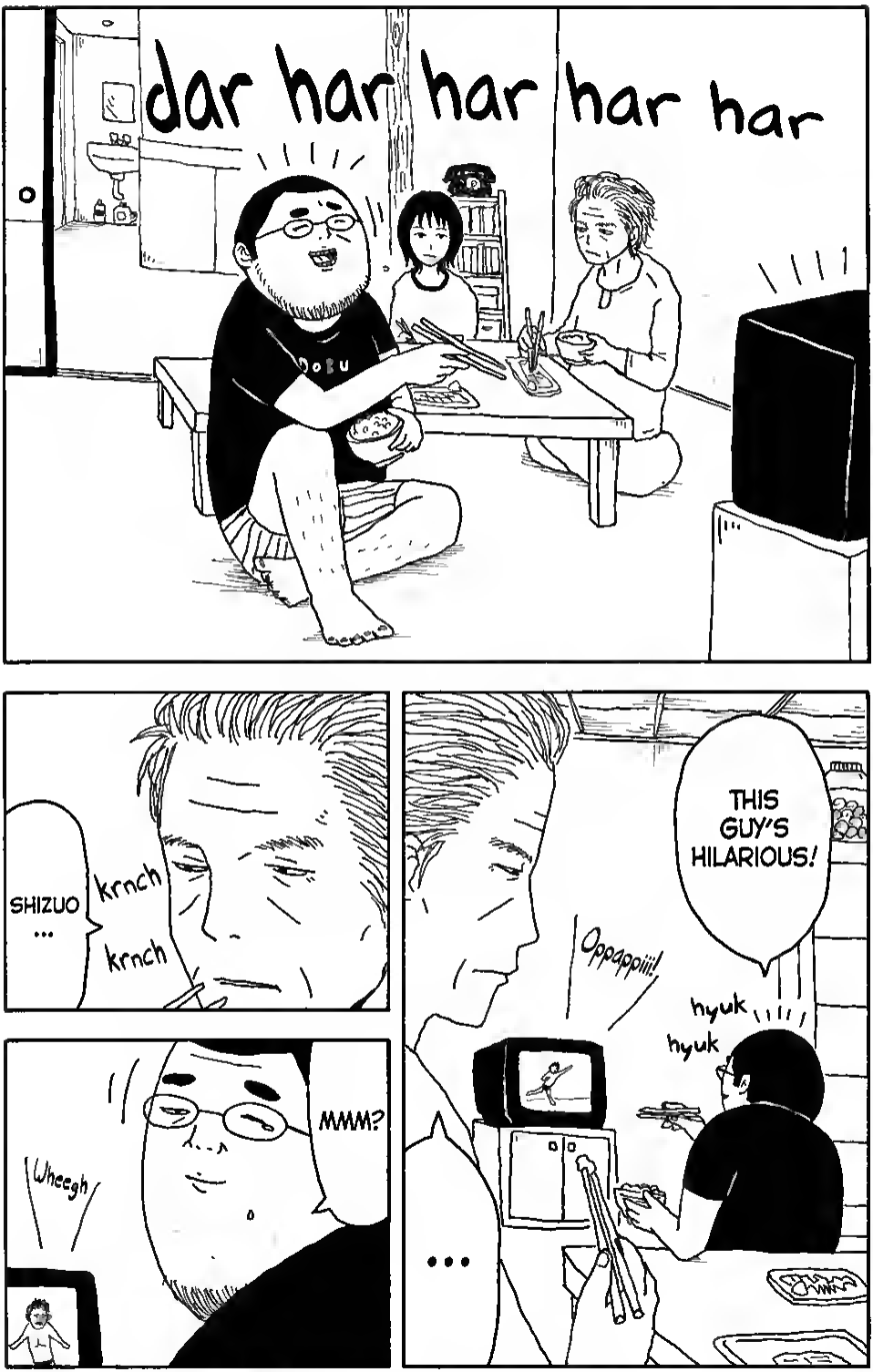
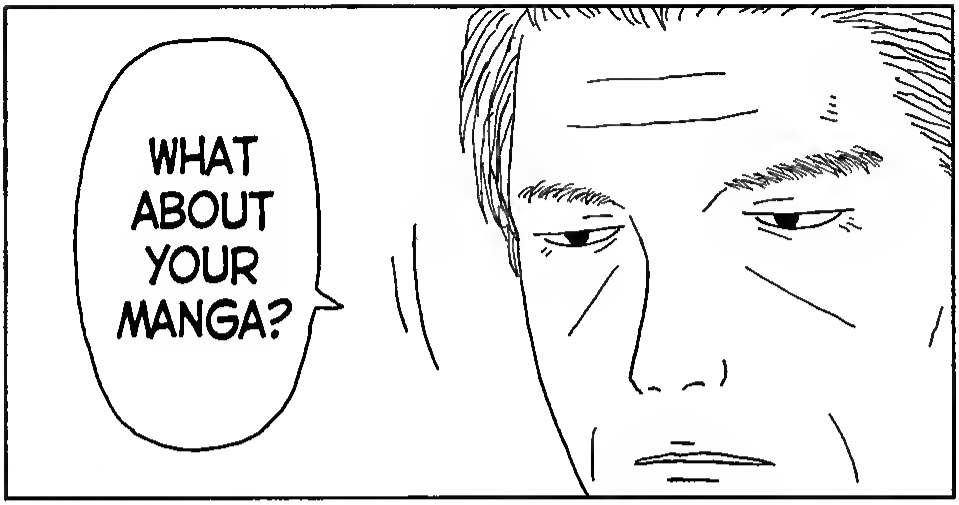
Chapter 11:

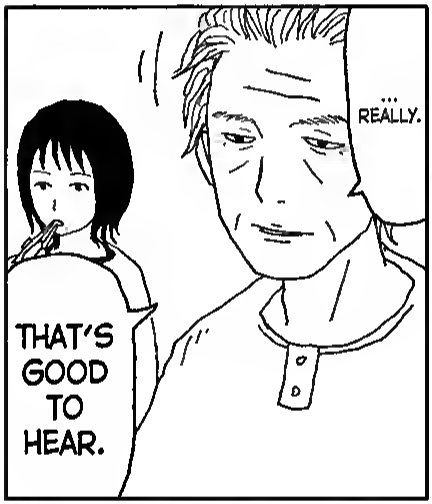
The Times

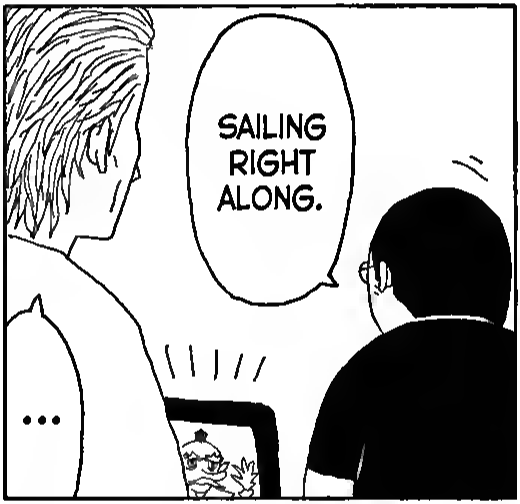


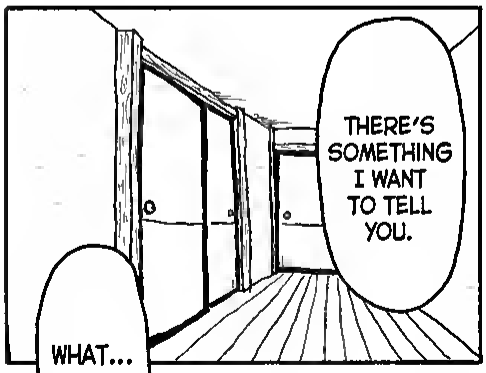


Shizuo's watching Kojima Yoshio, an Okinawan comedian who always performs naked save for a pair of tight bikini shorts His chanted tagline was *demo sonnano kankei nai* (but that doesn't matter), often followed by the nonsensical *oppappii*


WHAT ABOUT YOUR MANGA?

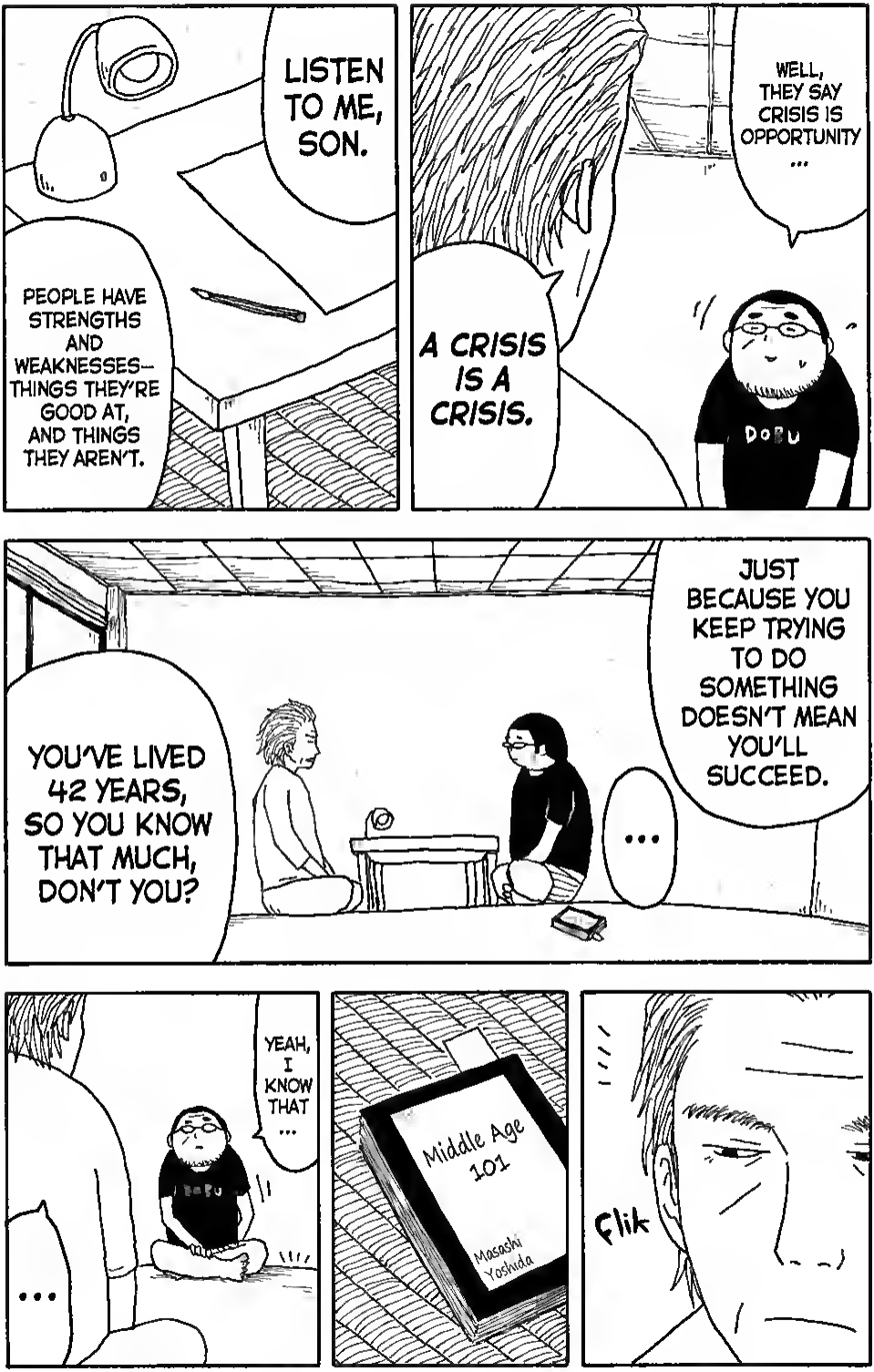

...REALLY.
THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR.

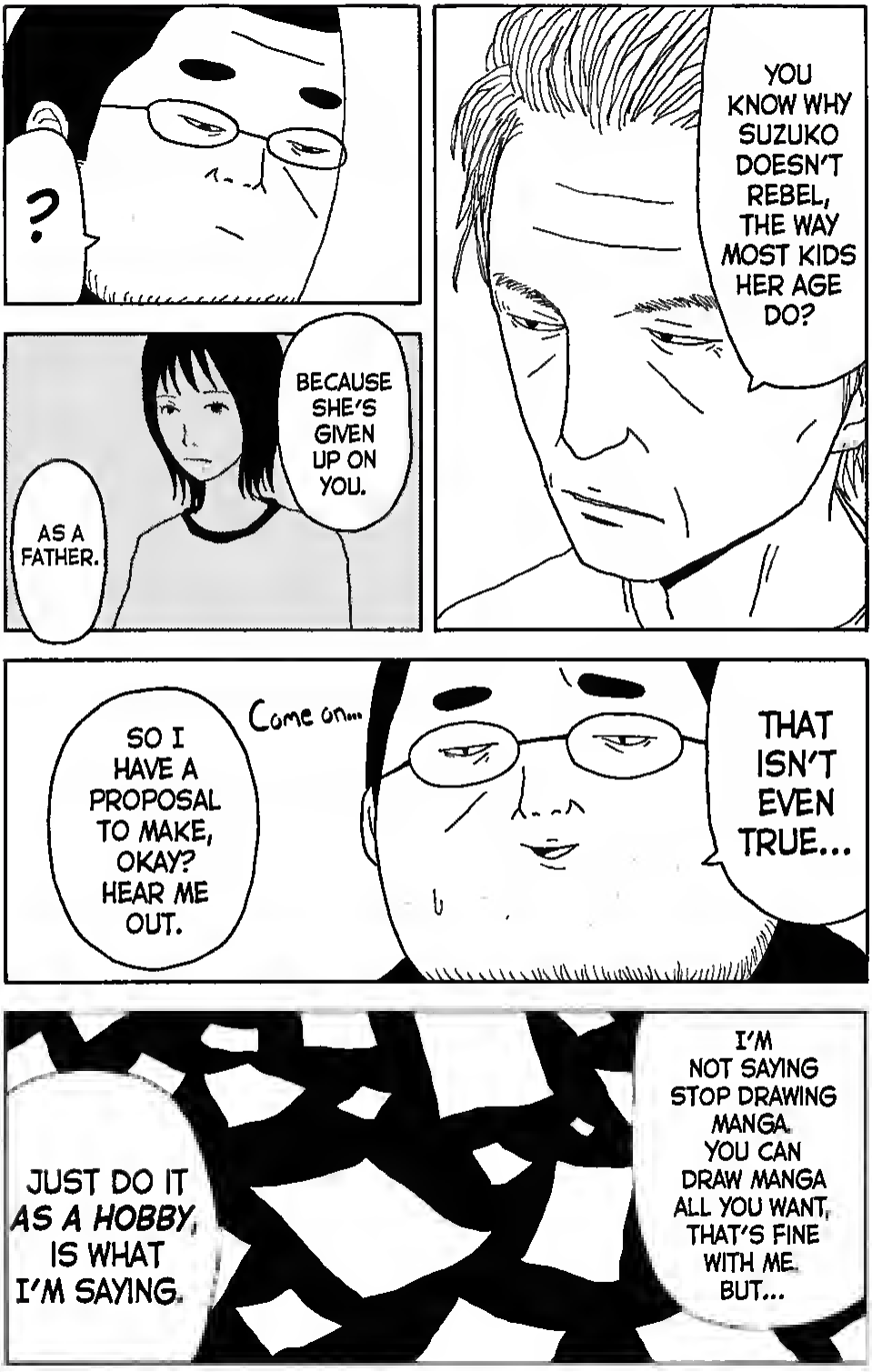

SAILING RIGHT ALONG.
...

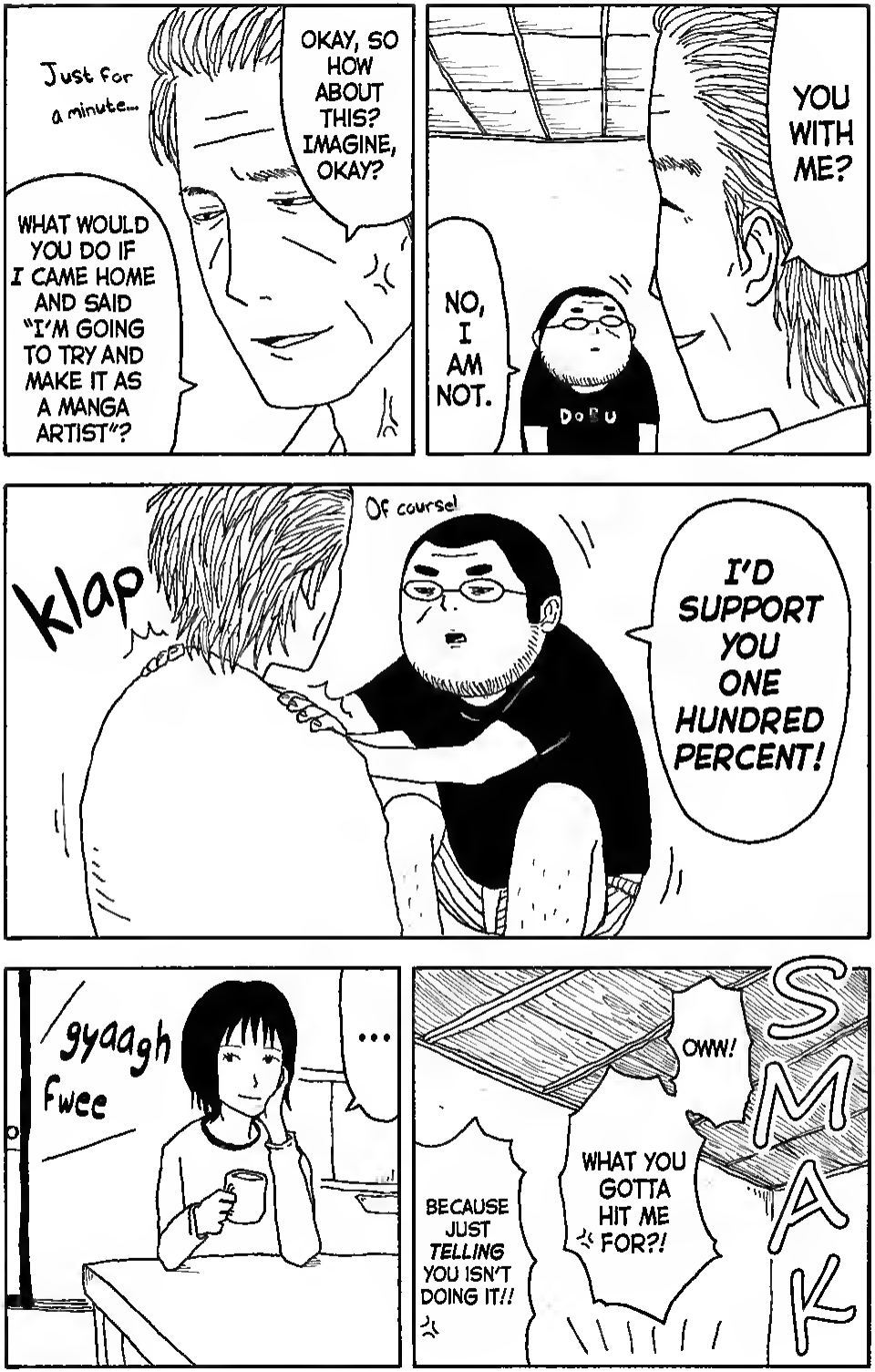

THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO TELL YOU.
WHAT...

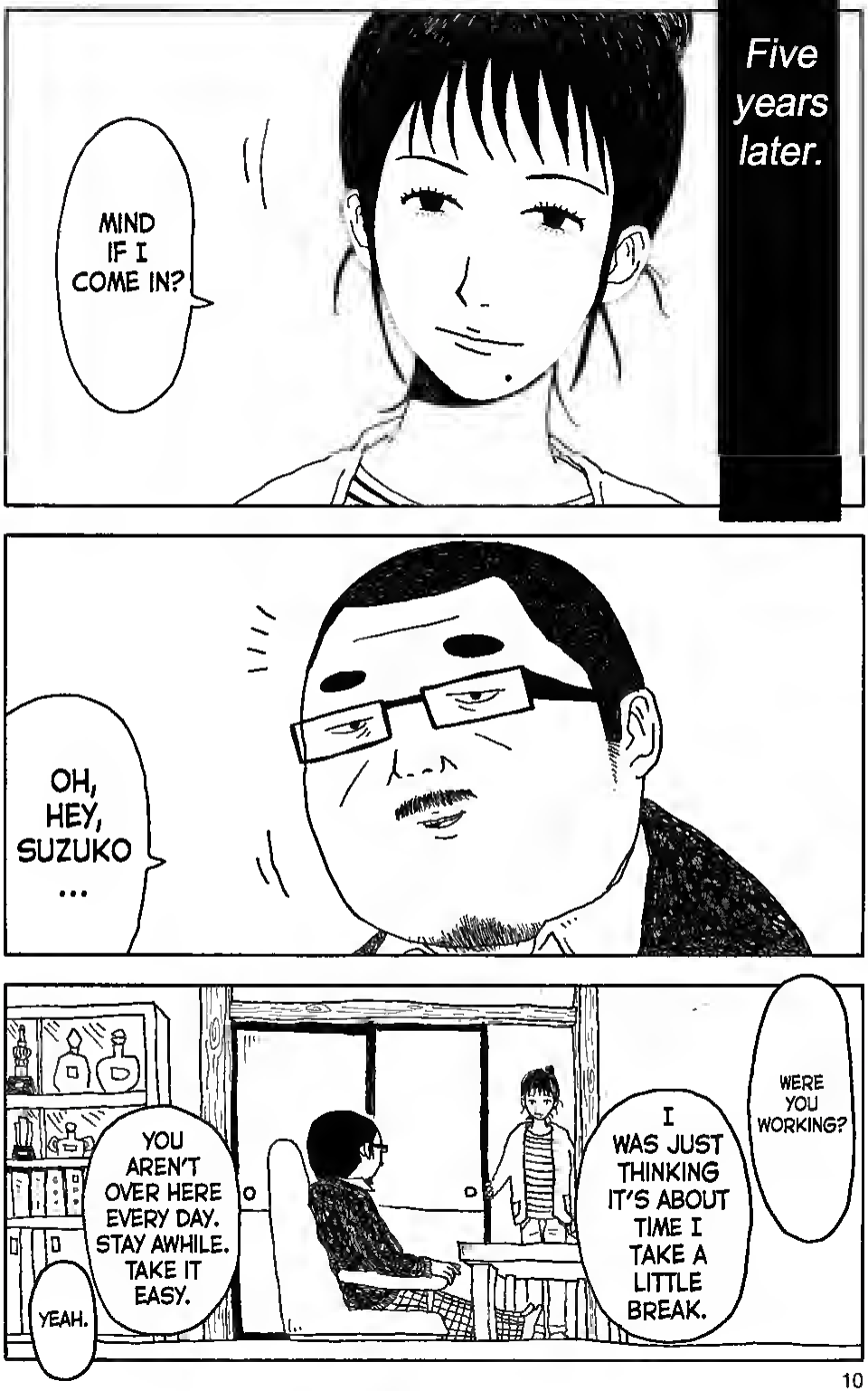
COME 'ERE A SEC, SHIZUO.
...
I'M STILL EATING ...

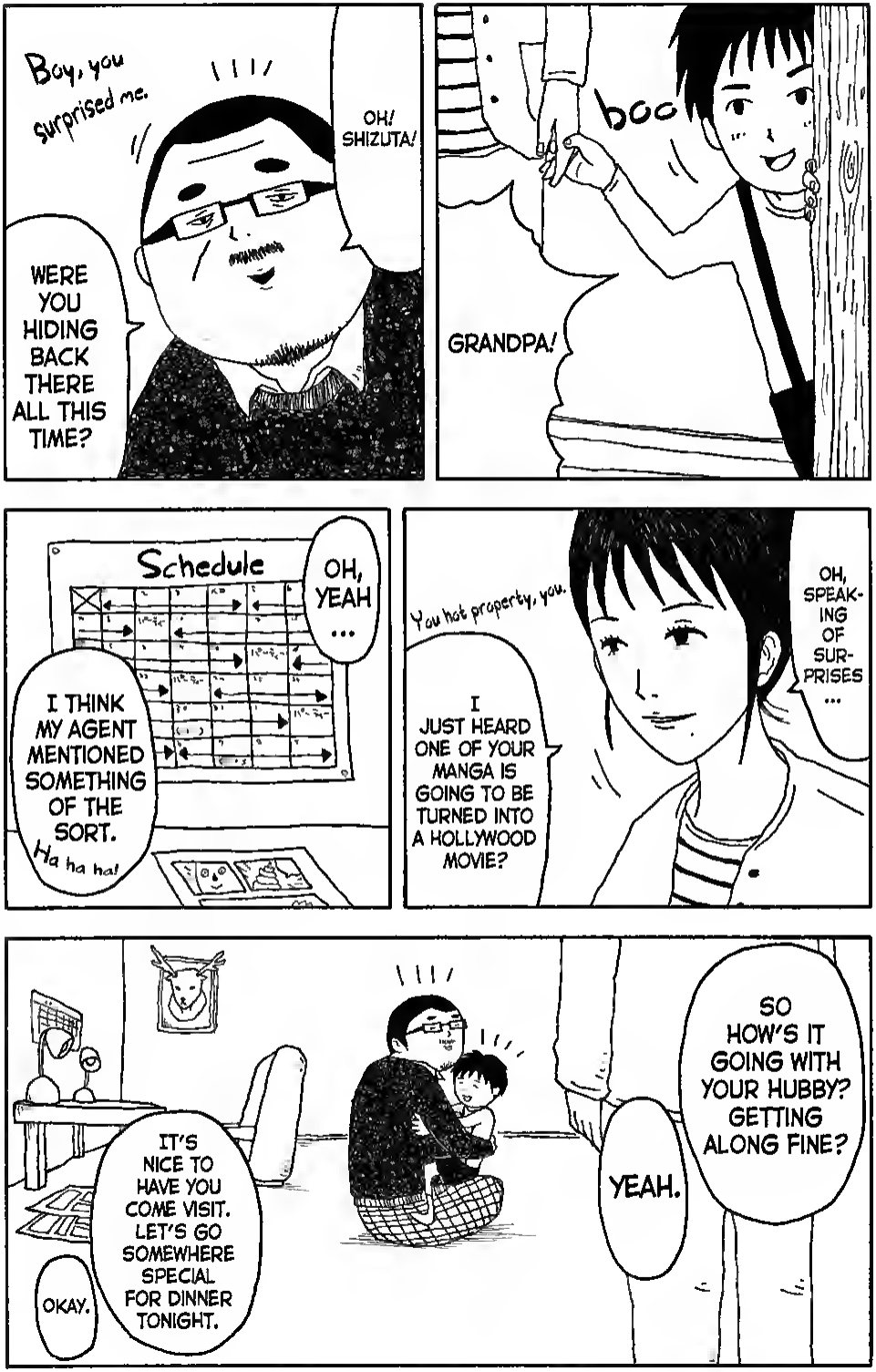
YOU'RE IN TROUBLE.


LISTEN TO ME, SON.
PEOPLE HAVE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES—THINGS THEY'RE GOOD AT, AND THINGS THEY AREN'T.
WELL, THEY SAY CRISIS IS OPPORTUNITY ...
A CRISIS IS A CRISIS.
DOBU
JUST BECAUSE YOU KEEP TRYING TO DO SOMETHING DOESN'T MEAN YOU'LL SUCCEED.
...
YOU'VE LIVED 42 YEARS, SO YOU KNOW THAT MUCH, DON'T YOU?
YEAH, I KNOW THAT ...
...
Middle Age 101
Masashi Yoshida
Clik


?
YOU KNOW WHY SUZUKO DOESN'T REBEL, THE WAY MOST KIDS HER AGE DO?
BECAUSE SHE'S GIVEN UP ON YOU.
AS A FATHER.
THAT ISN'T EVEN TRUE...
Come on...
SO I HAVE A PROPOSAL TO MAKE, OKAY? HEAR ME OUT.
I'M NOT SAYING STOP DRAWING MANGA. YOU CAN DRAW MANGA ALL YOU WANT, THAT'S FINE WITH ME. BUT...
JUST DO IT *AS A HOBBY*, IS WHAT I'M SAYING.


Just for a minute...
OKAY, SO HOW ABOUT THIS? IMAGINE, OKAY?
WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF I CAME HOME AND SAID "I'M GOING TO TRY AND MAKE IT AS A MANGA ARTIST"?
YOU WITH ME?
NO, I AM NOT.
DOEU
Of course!
klap
I'D SUPPORT YOU ONE HUNDRED PERCENT!
gyaagh
fwee
...
SMAK
OWW!
WHAT YOU GOTTA HIT ME FOR?!
BECAUSE JUST TELLING YOU ISN'T DOING IT!!


Five years later.
MIND IF I COME IN?
OH, HEY, SUZUKO ...
YOU AREN'T OVER HERE EVERY DAY. STAY AWHILE. TAKE IT EASY.
YEAH.
I WAS JUST THINKING IT'S ABOUT TIME I TAKE A LITTLE BREAK.
WERE YOU WORKING?


Boy, you surprised me.
OH! SHIZUTA!
WERE YOU HIDING BACK THERE ALL THIS TIME?
boo
GRANDPA!
Schedule
OH, YEAH ...
I THINK MY AGENT MENTIONED SOMETHING OF THE SORT.
Ha ha ha!
You hot property, you.
I JUST HEARD ONE OF YOUR MANGA IS GOING TO BE TURNED INTO A HOLLYWOOD MOVIE?
OH, SPEAKING OF SURPRISES ...
SO HOW'S IT GOING WITH YOUR HUBBY? GETTING ALONG FINE?
YEAH.
IT'S NICE TO HAVE YOU COME VISIT. LET'S GO SOMEWHERE SPECIAL FOR DINNER TONIGHT.
OKAY.

SAKIKO ...
tremble
tremble
LOOK AT THIS ...
IT'S A MANGA BY YOUR SON SHIZUO ...
mutter mutter
AREN'T YOU PROUD OF HIM?
OH, BOY... HE DOES THIS EVERY SINGLE DAY ...
FUNNY. HE WAS SO DEAD SET AGAINST ME BECOMING A MANGA ARTIST, AT FIRST...
HE WAS, WASN'T HE?
mutter mutter
BUT, WELL... I'M GLAD HE SEEMS TO BE HAPPIER ABOUT IT NOW.
YEAH.

HMM?
DAD!
LOOK WHO CAME OVER FOR A VISIT!
OH, HO... IT'S SUZUKO AND... SHIZU... SHIZU...
SHIZUTA! HIS NAME ENDS IN TA, DAD!
AH, THAT'S RIGHT... COME HERE, SHIZUO.
SHIZUTA, DAD! HIS NAME ENDS IN TA!
tee hee hee
HEY... HOW YA DOIN', KIDDO?
GREAT, GRANDPA!
ta ta ta ta

HEY...
...
God
thud
thud
YOUR DAD, HE WAS REALLY SERIOUS TODAY...
I KNOW... HE KINDA SCARED ME...
...
nwoop
Dork
CAN YOU AFFORD TO LIE AROUND SPINNING FEEL-GOOD FANTASIES? I DON'T THINK SO...

(32)
JEEZ, DUDE ...
THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU QUIT YOUR JOB ON THE FLY...
SO WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO?
(32)
LIKE, YOU AREN'T GETTING ANY YOUNGER, YOU KNOW?
MAYBE YOU OUGHTA HAVE THOUGHT IT THROUGH A LITTLE MORE.
(42)
...
IT ALL COMES DOWN TO LUCK, MAN...
P
O
K

Born at the Wrong Time

Melody & Lyrics by Shizuo Oguro (22)

1.
My time, it never came
In a world full of mistakes
I never could fulfill my potential
Every dey I weke up in the middle of the night
And drink myself sadly back to sleep

What's so wrong with being jobless?

I'm out of luck, yes I am
I was born at the wrong time

2.
My time, it still doesn't come
Every eye that looks at me is blind
Nobody notices my sense of style
All the teers I've shed edd e certain something
To the taste of my sad nightcap again tonight

Does finding a job make you a winner?

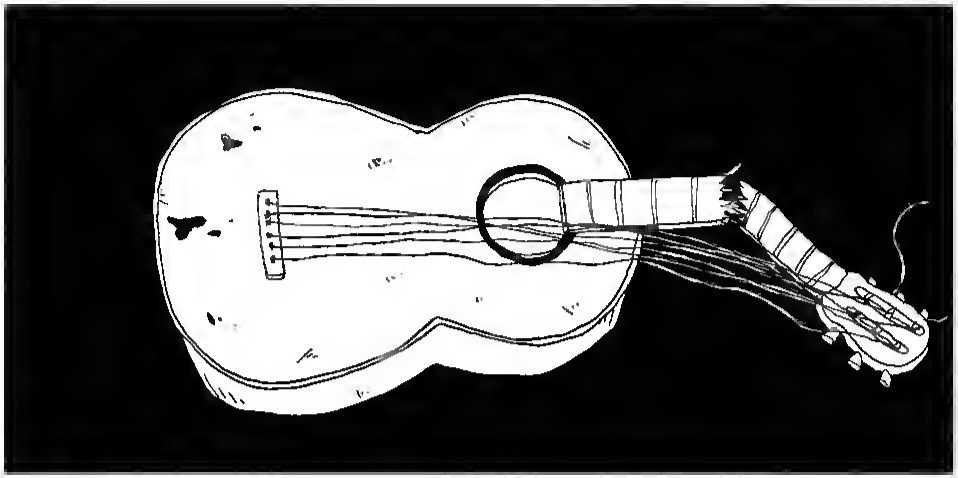
I'm out of luck, yes I em
I was born at the wrong time

(32)
QUIT SINGING THAT DUMB SONG, JEEZ! IT'S EMBARRASSING!
...
pwofa
pwofa
God
DOBU
...
(42)
BOY, YOU SALARYMEN ARE SO COOL ...
YOU WANNA GET SOCKED IN THE FACE, HUH?!
(32)
SHADDUP, YOU LOWLIFE LOSER!
hff!
(22)
THE DOG OF SOCIETY HOWLS ...
zwok
zwok
bween
bween
LET'S SEE WHO GETS SOCKED, THE DROPOUT OR THE COP-OUT ...
glare

(42)
HUNCH OVER A DESK AND SCRATCH AWAY ALL DAY ?!
YOU WANNA BE A MANGA ARTIST ?!
DABU
(32)
GOD, TAKE THAT TIE OFF AND BURN IT!
AND YOU'RE A SALARY-MAN?!
(22)
NO, YOU'RE JUST A LOSER!!
AND YOU— YOU'RE A DROP-OUT ?!
HAGH . HAGH ...
God
HAGH ...
Ghunk
Ghunk
YOU GOT NO GUTS, IS ALL! NO GUTS!!
(17)
YOU'RE ALL PATHETIC !!
Rage
God
YULPPP!

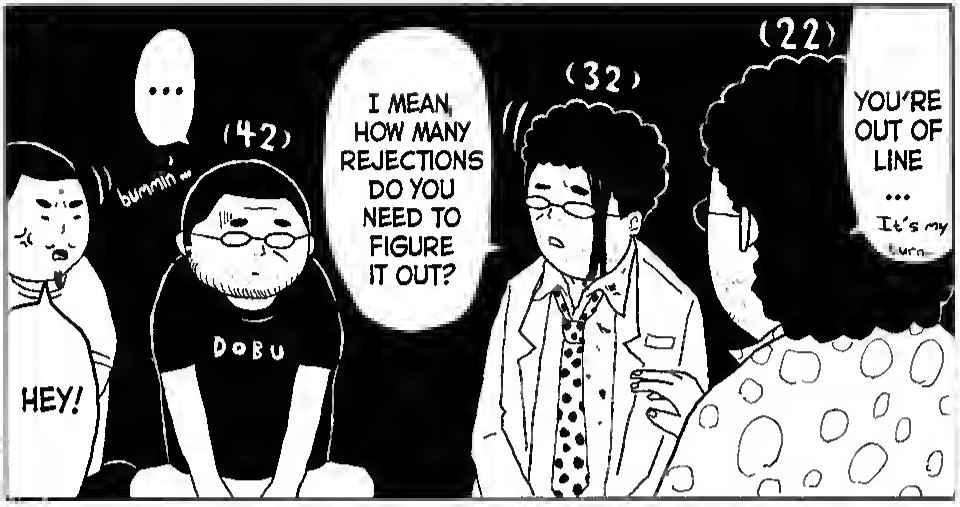
(32)
(22)
YOU BUNCH OF SCUM!!
(17)
Rage
(42)
bween
zwck zwck
WAIT A MINUTE ...

COME ON ...
(15)
...
That ugly mug.
(42)
WHAT THE HECK IS THAT UGLY MUG?
A BOTCHED FACELIFT?
DOBU
Had in mind.
(15)
HOLY MOLY, THAT'S WHAT I'M GOING TO LOOK LIKE?!
YOU'RE KIDDING ME! IT'S NOTHING LIKE WHAT I HAD IN MIND!!



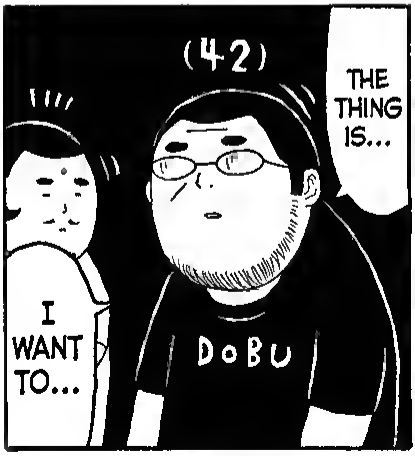
(42)
God
Dobu
(32)
(15)
(17)
(22)
...

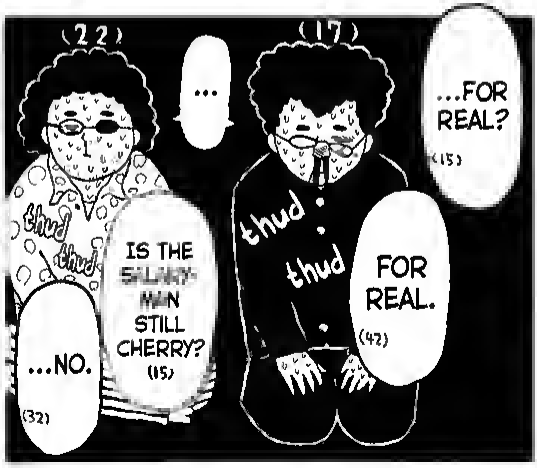
ARE WE SERIOUS ABOUT DRAWING MANGA?
OR IS IT JUST A HOBBY?
LET'S ALL TALK THIS OVER AND DECIDE—
God
WELL, THEN ...
...
(42)
mutter (15)
IT'S OVER ...
MY LIFE IS OVER ... I HAVE NO FUTURE ...
mutter
WHY DON'T WE GO IN ORDER OF AGE, STARTING WITH THE YOUNGEST?
WHAT DO YOU THINK, 15-YEAR-OLD?
(32)
SO JUST SETTLE FOR "HOBBY" AND THAT'S IT!
2WUP
(22)
HEY!
IT'S A HOBBY!
(17)
YOU NEXT, 17.
I THINK YOU SHOULD FIND SOMETHING A LOT COOLER ...


(22)
(32)
(42)
...
bummin...
I MEAN, HOW MANY REJECTIONS DO YOU NEED TO FIGURE IT OUT?
YOU'RE OUT OF LINE
...
It's my turn
HEY!
DOBU

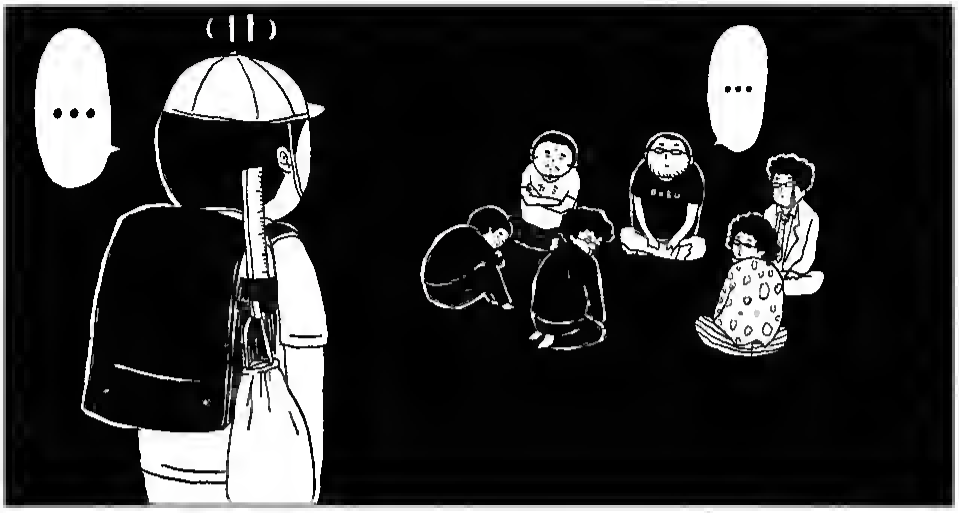
(42)
ARE YOU CHERRY?
(15)
...
NO.

(15)
I THINK THAT FOR ONCE, DAD IS RIGHT! NOW LET'S JUST DO LIKE HE SAYS!
(32)
HEY...
?
(42)


(42)
THE THING IS...
I WANT TO...
DOBU

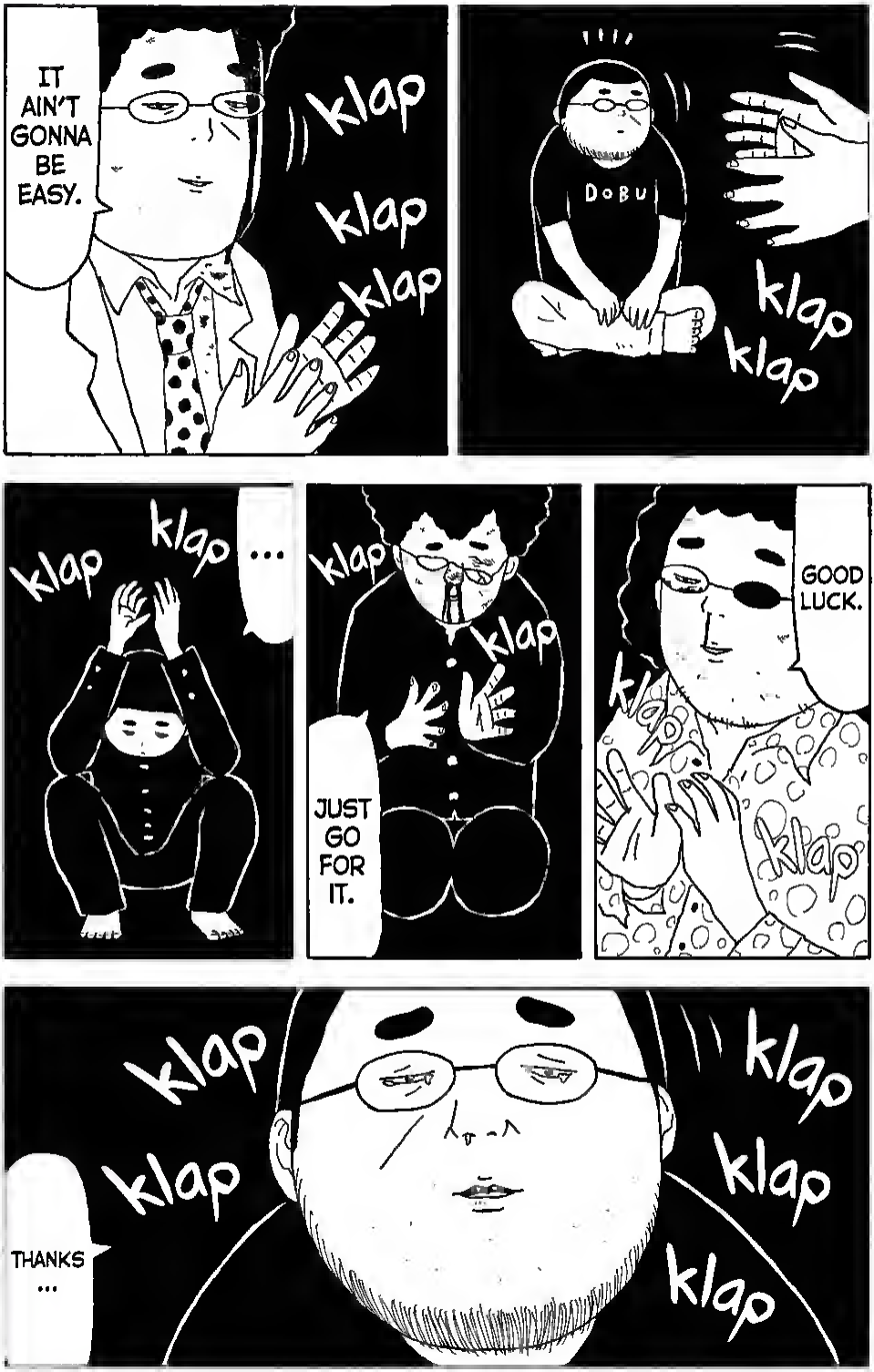

(22)
(17)
...
...FOR REAL?
(15)
thud
thud
thud
thud
IS THE [redacted] MAN STILL CHERRY?
(15)
...NO.
(32)
FOR REAL.
(42)

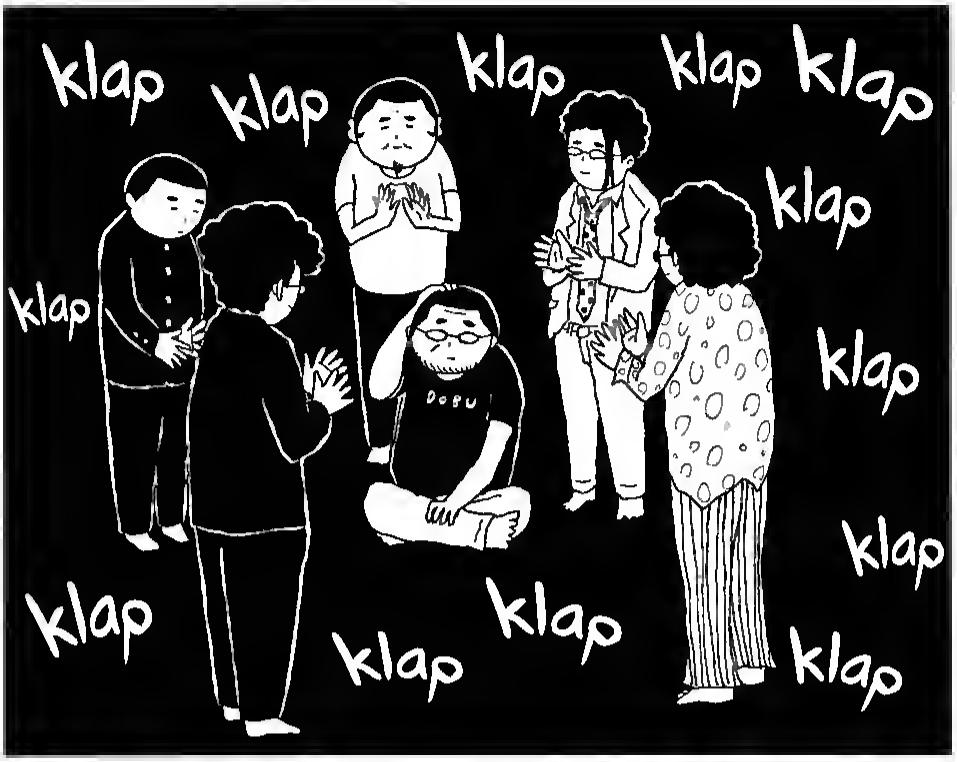
I REALLY WANT TO GET PUBLISHED.
HM?
...
God
DOBU

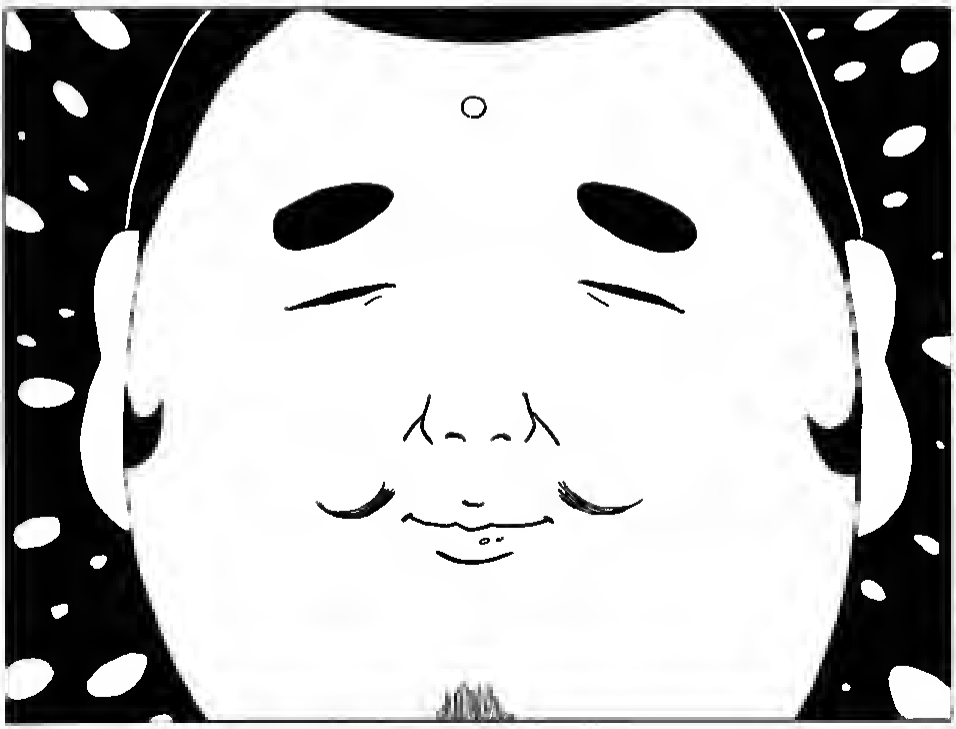

...
...

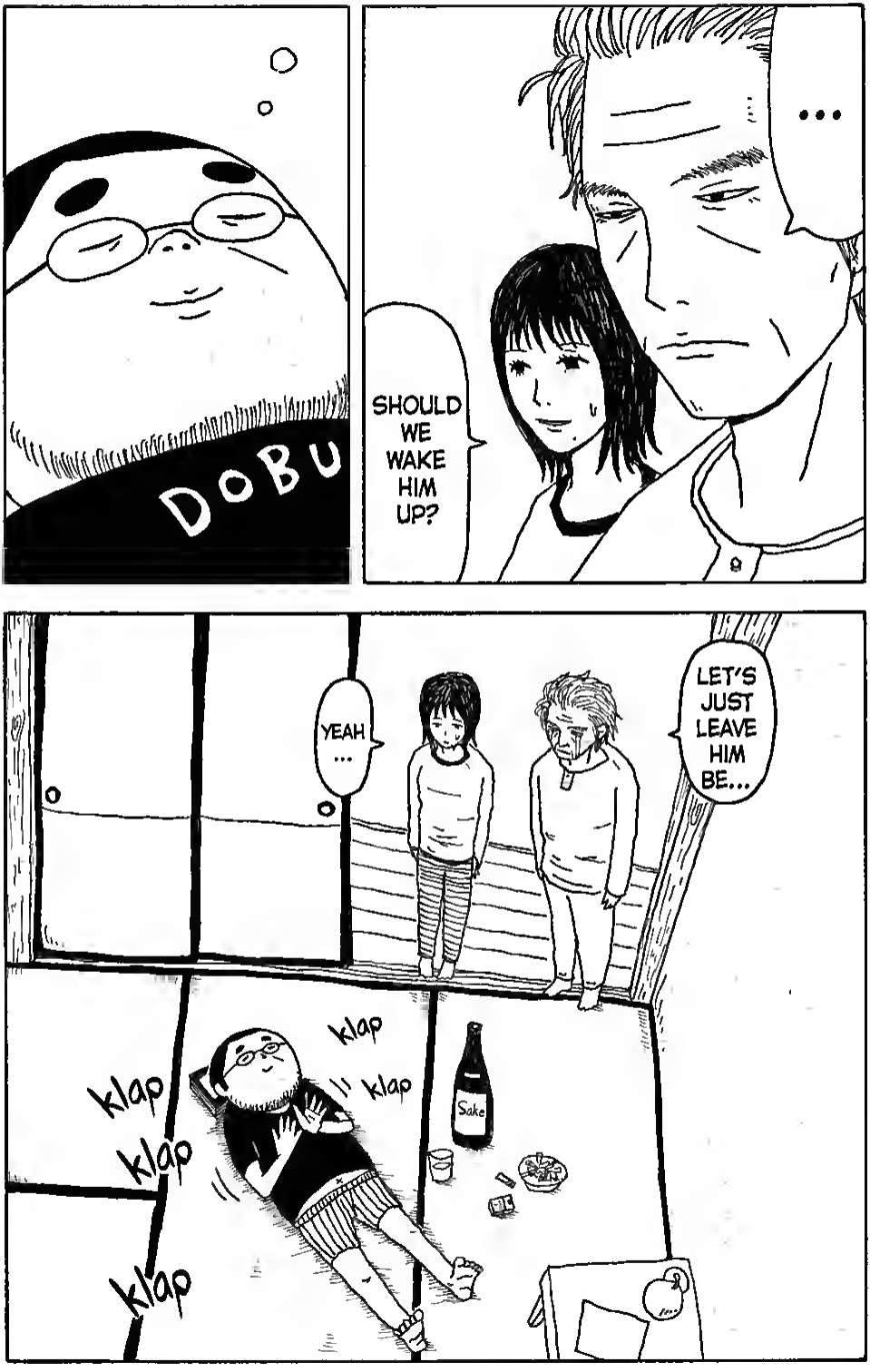
bwip
Nice
Oguro

...
tat
tat
tat
tat


IT AIN'T GONNA BE EASY.
klap klap klap
DOBU
klap klap
klap klap ...
klap klap
JUST GO FOR IT.
GOOD LUCK.
klap klap
klap klap klap
THANKS ...


klap
klap
klap
klap
klap
klap
klap
klap
klap
klap
klap
klap
klap
klap
DOBU

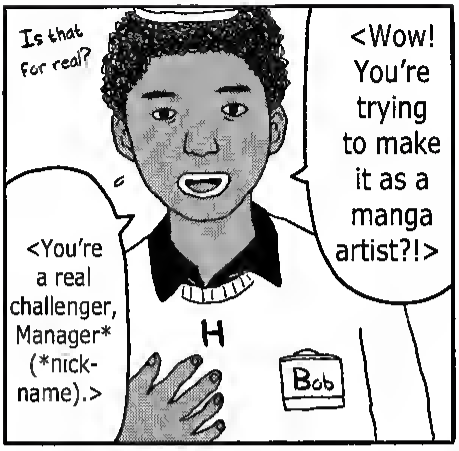



DOBU
SHOULD WE WAKE HIM UP?
...
YEAH ...
LET'S JUST LEAVE HIM BE...
klap
klap
klap
klap
Sake

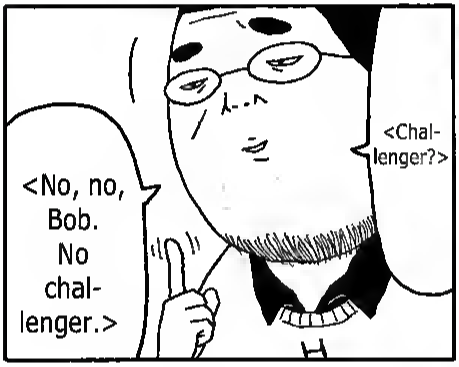
Chapter 12:

Goodbye, H Burgers!

H
Closed
H Burgers
SPEED IS EVERYTHING.
H Burgers
Now Hiring
WHEN YOU'RE FREE, DON'T WAIT TO BE TOLD WHAT TO DO— FIND WORK BY YOURSELF.
CUSTOMERS SHOULD NEVER HAVE TO WAIT MORE THAN THREE MINUTES FOR THEIR ORDER.
Tanaka
AND OF COURSE, THERE'S NO CHITCHATTING WITH EACH OTHER WHILE YOU'RE WORKING.
MAKE SURE YOU'RE NEVER JUST STANDING AROUND.


Is that for real?
<Wow! You're trying to make it as a manga artist?!>
<You're a real challenger, Manager* (*nick-name).>
Bob

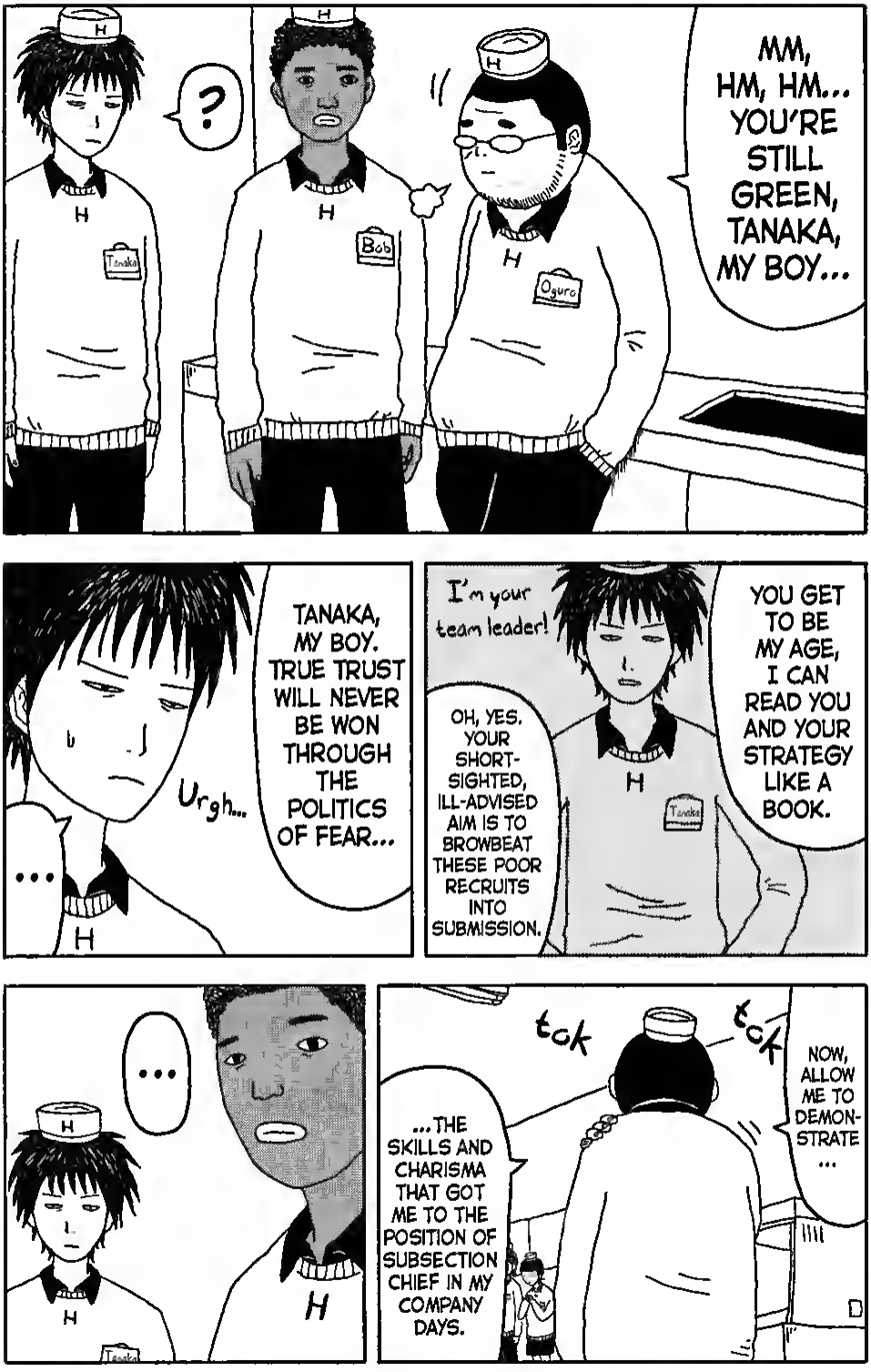
ALWAYS BE AWARE THAT CUSTOMERS SEE YOU, AND BEHAVE ACCORDINGLY.
chat
chit

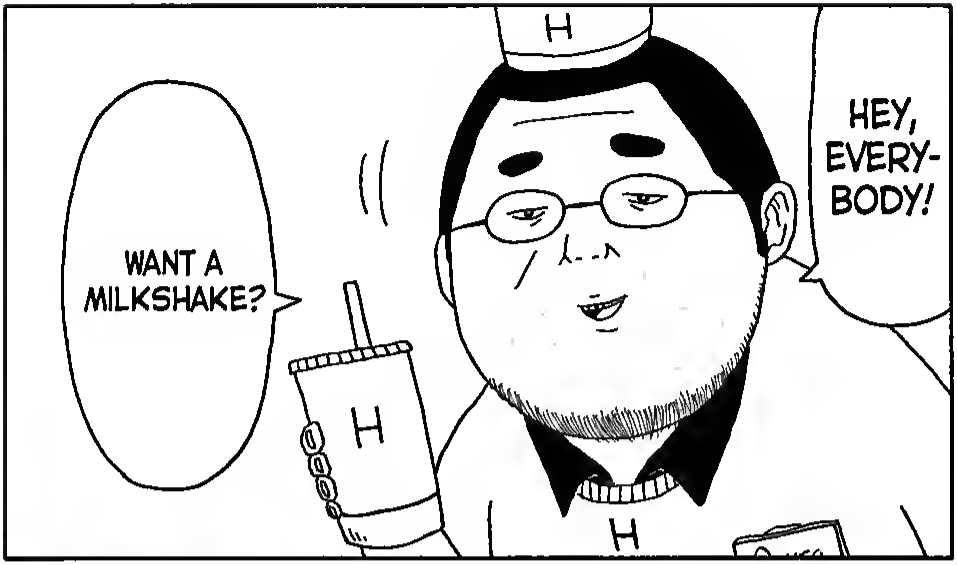

<Chal-lenger?>
<No, no, Bob. No chal-lenger.>

HA! HA! HA!

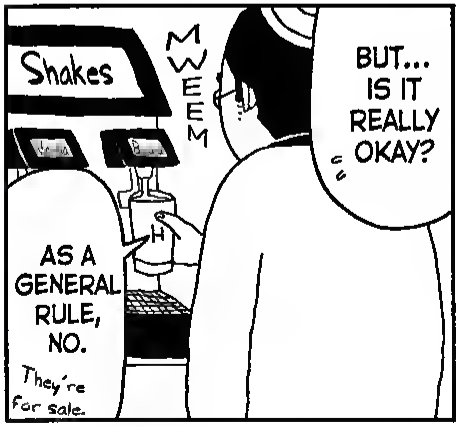
<Call me "samurai.">
...
<Okay! Hey, Samurai!!>

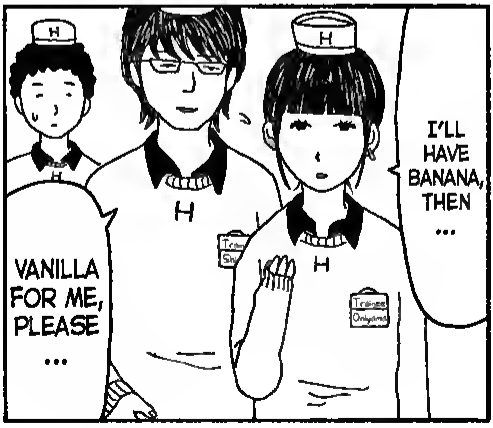
...
<What?>
HEY! MANAGER* (*NICK-NAME)!
...
...JUST USE JAPANESE WITH ME!
SO WHAT'S WITH THIS SLACK-OFF ATTITUDE OF YOURS TODAY, HUH?
YOU'RE THE SUB-LEADER, MANAGER— YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE SETTING AN EXAMPLE FOR OUR NEW WORKERS!
THE FIRST DAY IS CRUCIAL FOR TRAINING NEW PEOPLE, OKAY?

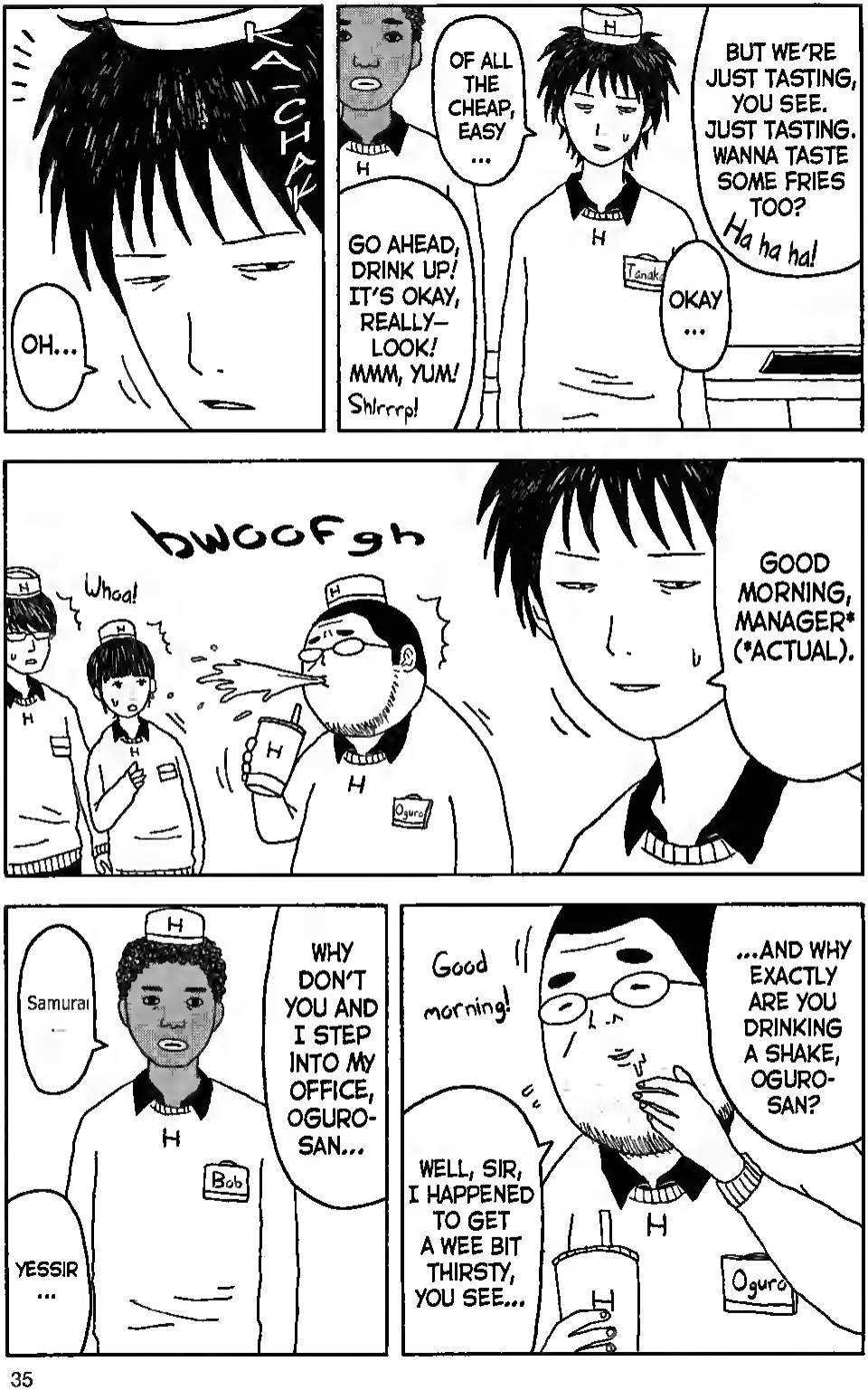

?
MM, HM, HM... YOU'RE STILL GREEN, TANAKA, MY BOY...
Tanaka
Bob
Oguro
TANAKA, MY BOY. TRUE TRUST WILL NEVER BE WON THROUGH THE POLITICS OF FEAR...
Urgh...
...
I'm your team leader!
OH, YES. YOUR SHORT-SIGHTED, ILL-ADVISED AIM IS TO BROWBEAT THESE POOR RECRUITS INTO SUBMISSION.
YOU GET TO BE MY AGE, I CAN READ YOU AND YOUR STRATEGY LIKE A BOOK.
...
tck
tck
...THE SKILLS AND CHARISMA THAT GOT ME TO THE POSITION OF SUBSECTION CHIEF IN MY COMPANY DAYS.
NOW, ALLOW ME TO DEMON-STRATE ...


HEY, EVERY-BODY!
WANT A MILKSHAKE?

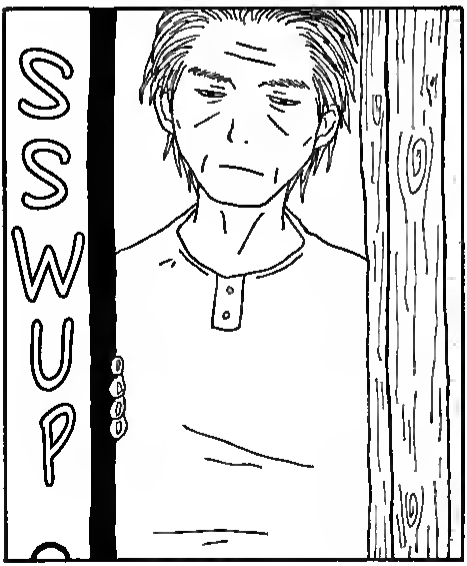
WHAT FLAVOR DO YOU WANT?

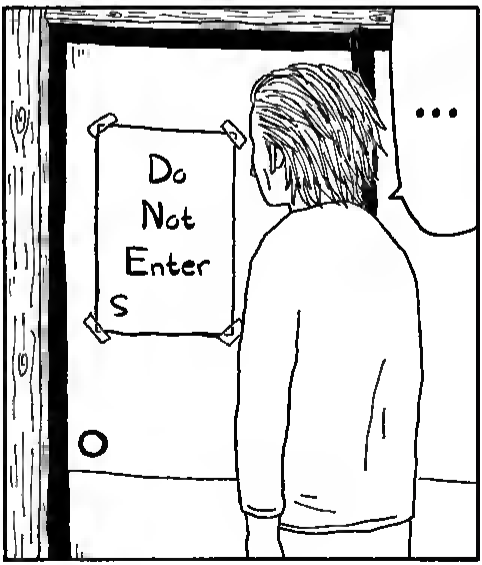

Shakes
MWEEM
BUT... IS IT REALLY OKAY?
AS A GENERAL RULE, NO.
They're for sale.

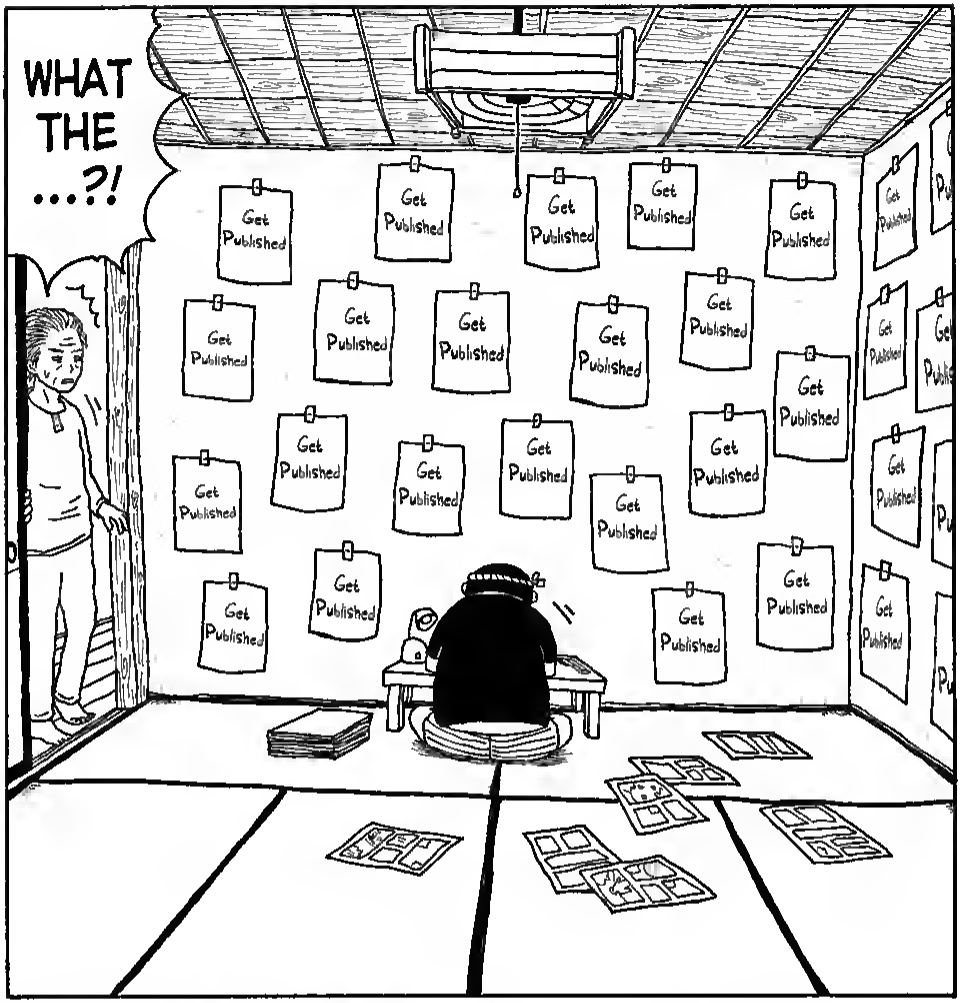

VANILLA FOR ME, PLEASE ...
I'LL HAVE BANANA, THEN ...


KACHAK
OH...
OF ALL THE CHEAP, EASY ...
BUT WE'RE JUST TASTING, YOU SEE. JUST TASTING. WANNA TASTE SOME FRIES TOO?
Ha ha ha!
GO AHEAD, DRINK UP! IT'S OKAY, REALLY— LOOK! MMM, YUM!
Shirrrp!
OKAY ...
bwoofgh
Whoa!
GOOD MORNING, MANAGER* (*ACTUAL).
Oguro
Samurai
WHY DON'T YOU AND I STEP INTO MY OFFICE, OGURO-SAN...
Bob
YESSIR ...
Good morning!
...AND WHY EXACTLY ARE YOU DRINKING A SHAKE, OGURO-SAN?
WELL, SIR, I HAPPENED TO GET A WEE BIT THIRSTY, YOU SEE...
Oguro

A

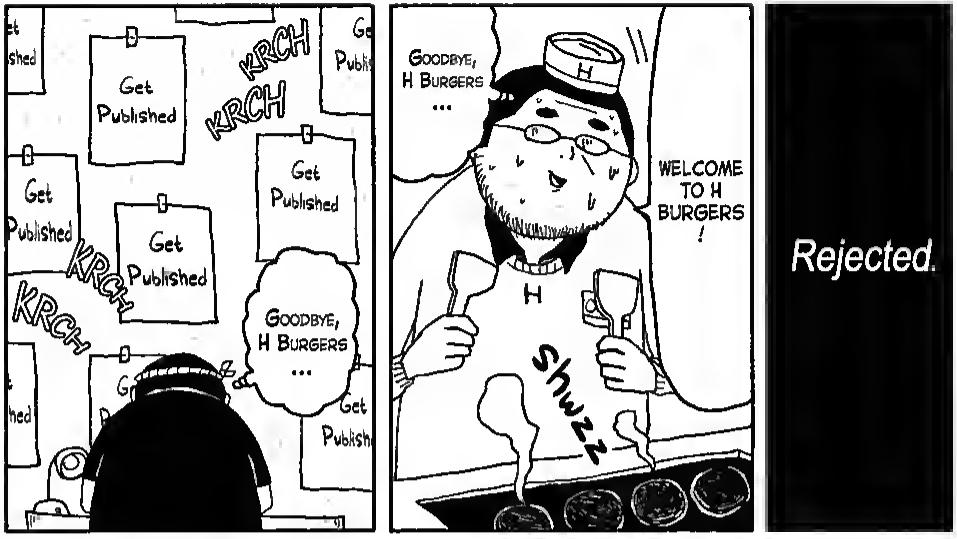

SSWUP


Do
Not
Enter
...

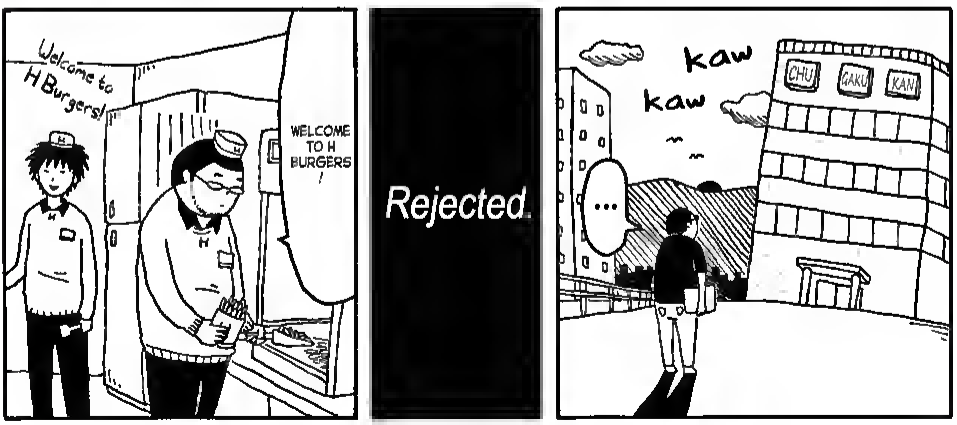

WHAT THE ...?!
Get Published

KPCH KPCH
GOODBYE, H BURGERS!
GOODBYE, H BURGERS!
KRCH
KRCH

GOODBYE, H BURGERS!
KA-TUNK
KA-TUNK
KA-TUNK
KA-TUNK
KA-TUNK
GOODBYE, H BURGERS!
CHU
GAKU
KAN
GOODBYE, H BURGERS!
GOODBYE, H BURGERS!
You can't live me, because I
?


Get Published
KRCH
KRCH
Get Published
Get Published
Get Published
KRCH
KRCH
Get Published
GOODBYE, H BURGERS ...
GOODBYE, H BURGERS ...
WELCOME TO H BURGERS !
H
Shwzz
Rejected.

YESSIR ...
(42)
YOU DO IT AGAIN, I SLAP YOU.
Manager (31)
GOODBYE, H BURGERS ...


Welcome to H Burgers!
WELCOME TO H BURGERS !
Rejected.
kaw
kaw
CHU
GAKU
KAN
...

SEIWA ELECTRIC
KATTA
KATTA
KATTA
KATTA
KATTA
KATTA
MISTER MIYATA.

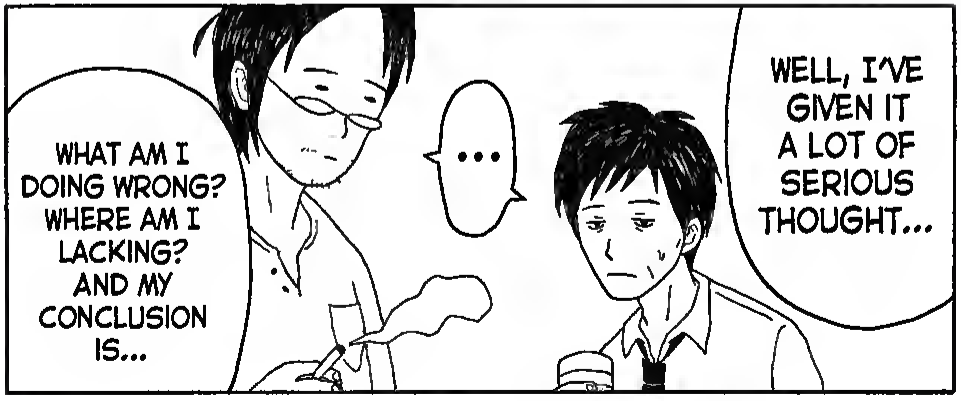
TELL HIM I'LL CALL HIM BACK LATER.
THERE'S A MR. SHIZUO OGURO ON THE LINE FOR YOU.
HE SAYS IT'S AN EMERGENCY ...
...
...
...PUT HIM THROUGH.

WHAT AM I DOING WRONG?
...
Sip
WHAT DO YOU THINK, KUNI-SAN?
DON'T ASK ME...
I DON'T KNOW A WHOLE LOT ABOUT MANGA, SO...

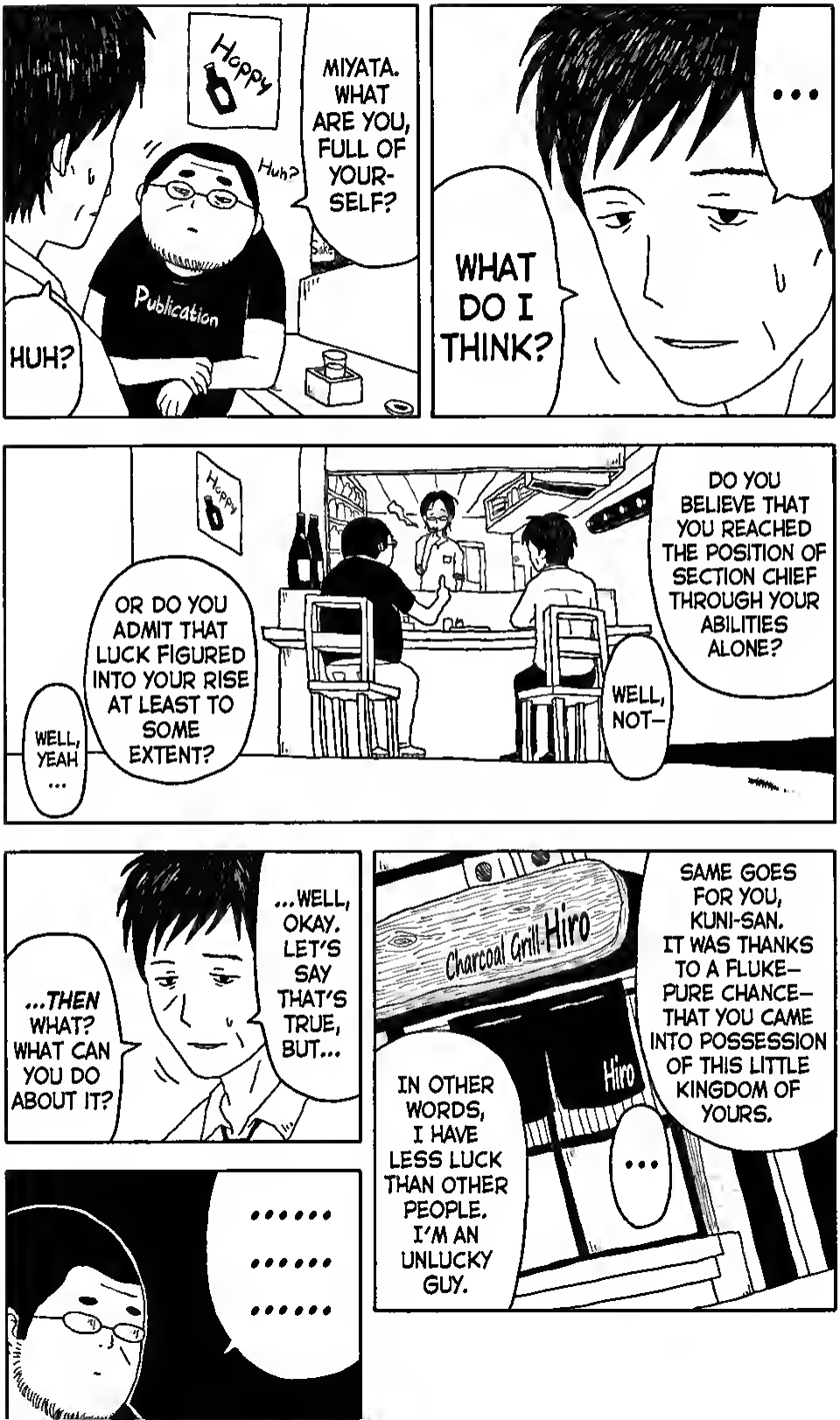
YOU DON'T HAVE ANY TALENT?

KUNI-SAN...
YOUR FACE IS FUNNY. YOUR JOKES AREN'T. OKAY?
ｈｆｆ

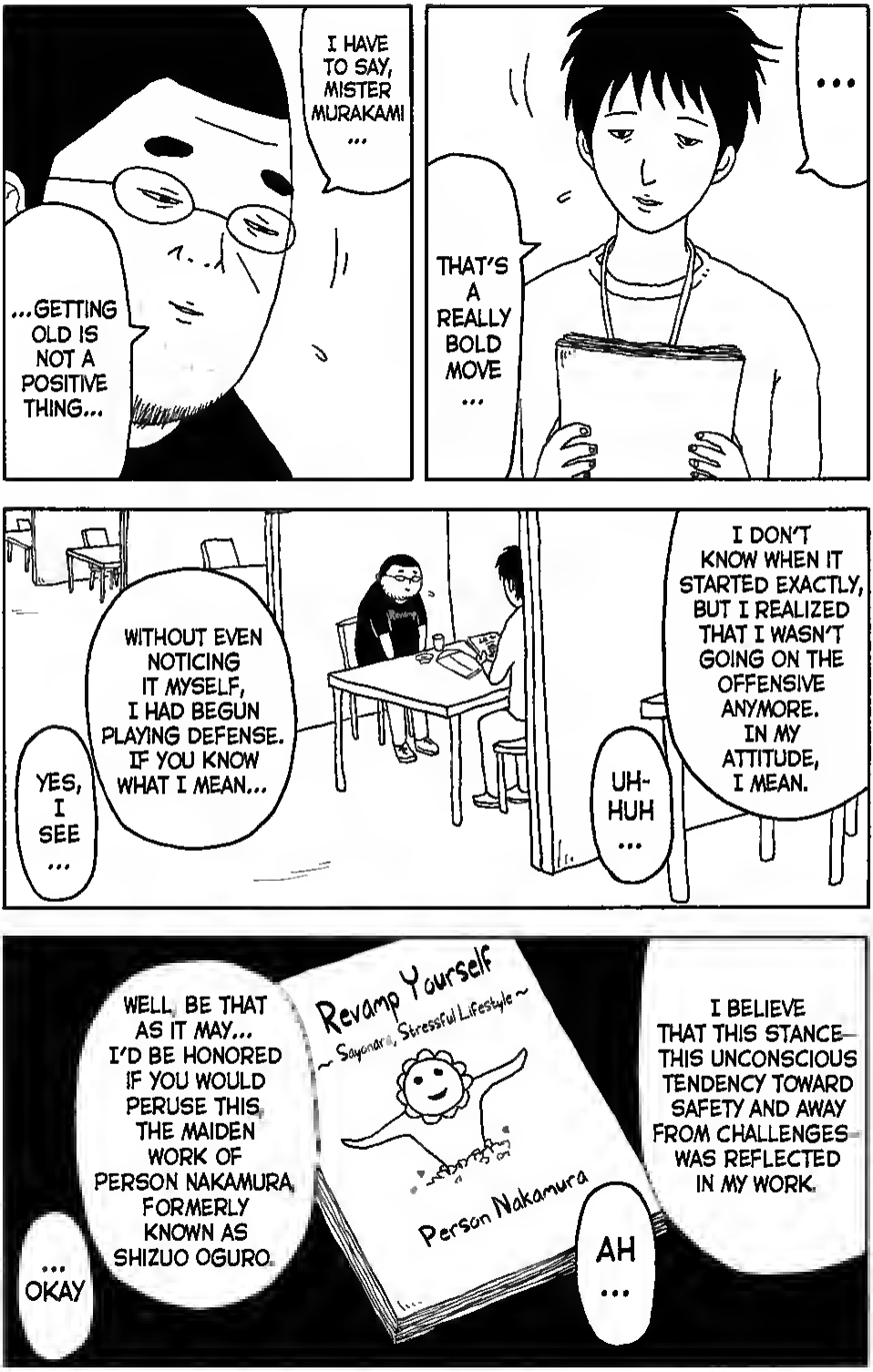
...


WELL, I'VE GIVEN IT A LOT OF SERIOUS THOUGHT...
...
WHAT AM I DOING WRONG? WHERE AM I LACKING? AND MY CONCLUSION IS...

THAT IT'S BASICALLY A LUCK-RELATED ISSUE.
At the end of the day.
SIMPLY PUT, I'M UNLUCKY!
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
Publication

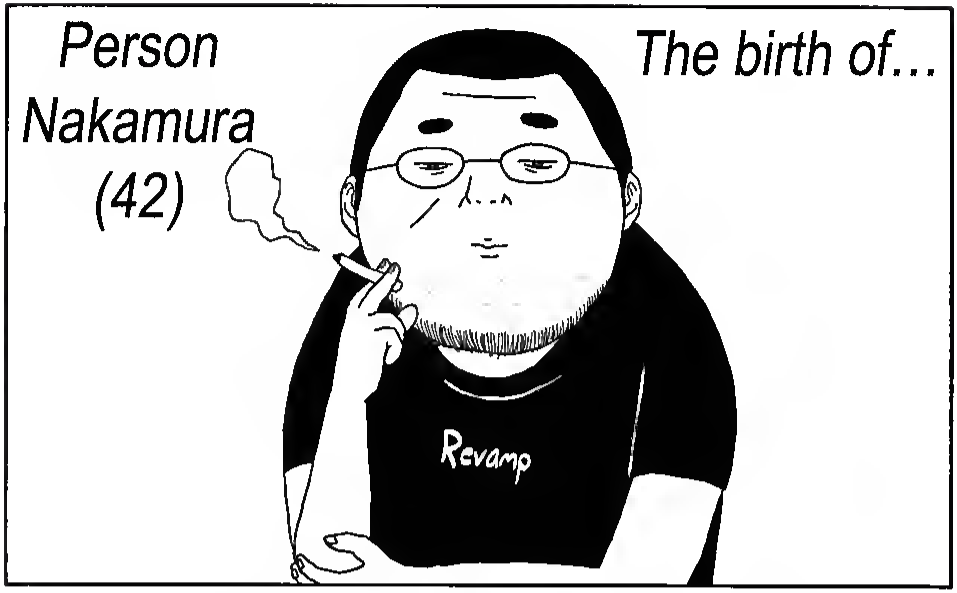

Happy
Huh?
MIYATA. WHAT ARE YOU, FULL OF YOURSELF?
Publication
HUH?
...
WHAT DO I THINK?
Happy
DO YOU BELIEVE THAT YOU REACHED THE POSITION OF SECTION CHIEF THROUGH YOUR ABILITIES ALONE?
WELL, NOT—
OR DO YOU ADMIT THAT LUCK FIGURED INTO YOUR RISE AT LEAST TO SOME EXTENT?
WELL, YEAH ...
...WELL, OKAY. LET'S SAY THAT'S TRUE, BUT...
...THEN WHAT? WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?
Charcoal Grill-Hiro
Hiro
SAME GOES FOR YOU, KUNI-SAN. IT WAS THANKS TO A FLUKE—PURE CHANCE—THAT YOU CAME INTO POSSESSION OF THIS LITTLE KINGDOM OF YOURS.
...
IN OTHER WORDS, I HAVE LESS LUCK THAN OTHER PEOPLE. I'M AN UNLUCKY GUY.
.....
.....
.....

Person Nakamura


I HAVE TO SAY, MISTER MURAKAMI ...
...GETTING OLD IS NOT A POSITIVE THING...
...
THAT'S A REALLY BOLD MOVE ...
I DON'T KNOW WHEN IT STARTED EXACTLY, BUT I REALIZED THAT I WASN'T GOING ON THE OFFENSIVE ANYMORE. IN MY ATTITUDE, I MEAN.
WITHOUT EVEN NOTICING IT MYSELF, I HAD BEGUN PLAYING DEFENSE. IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN...
UH-HUH ...
YES, I SEE ...
I BELIEVE THAT THIS STANCE—THIS UNCONSCIOUS TENDENCY TOWARD SAFETY AND AWAY FROM CHALLENGES—WAS REFLECTED IN MY WORK.
Revamp Yourself
~Sayonara, Stressful Lifestyle~
Person Nakamura
AH ...
WELL, BE THAT AS IT MAY... I'D BE HONORED IF YOU WOULD PERUSE THIS, THE MAIDEN WORK OF PERSON NAKAMURA, FORMERLY KNOWN AS SHIZUO OGURO.
... OKAY

It must be a question of luck.
Yes ...
Fortunes Told
Fortunes Told
As I thought ...
Sensei!
What should I do about this?
I knew it ...
Publication
Yes, it is no doubt as you say.

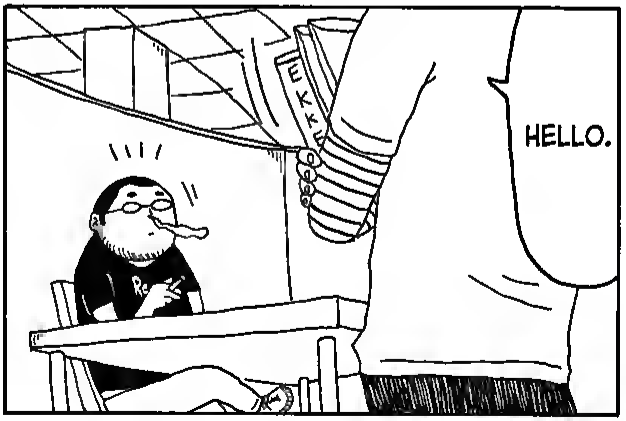
Aha!
Well, a lot of manga artists work under assumed names, don't they? Pen names. I think they're called.
My name?
Try changing your name?
Hmmm...
Sensei?
mutter
mutter
mutter
...
Hmmm ...
P-please do that, Sensei!
Well then, let me gaze into this crystal ball and seek in it a pen name that will change your fortunes...
Personal Trading
Nakamura Steel

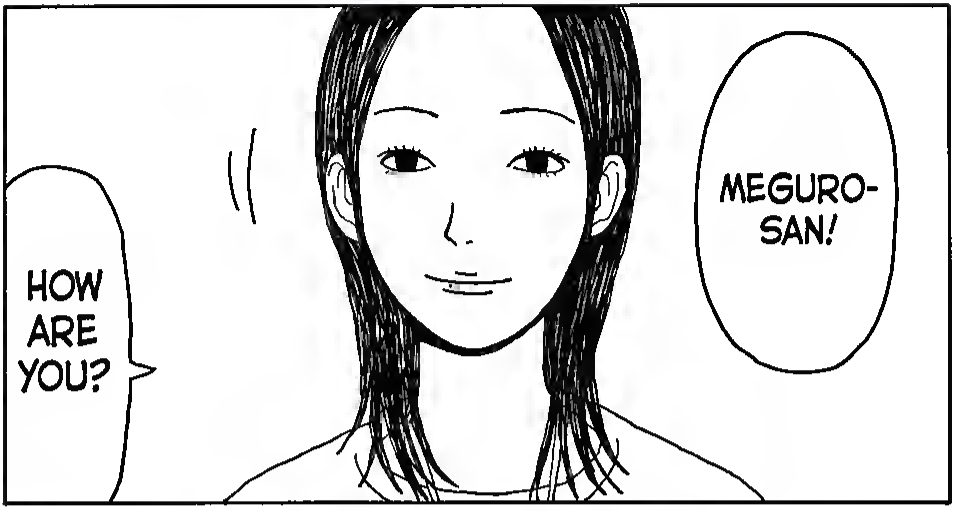

Person Nakamura (42)
The birth of...
Revamp

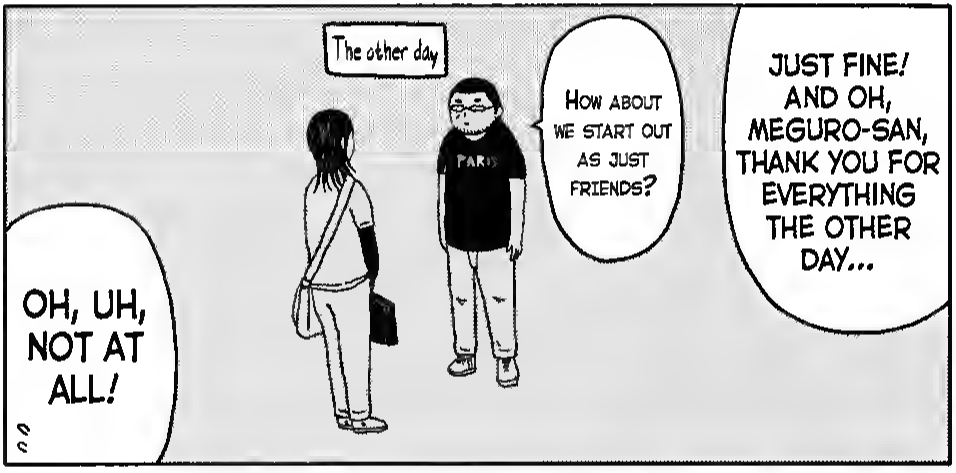
GETTING YOUR FORTUNE TOLD REALLY COSTS...
WOW, THOUGH, ¥10,000* FOR 15 MINUTES...
PHLAP
...

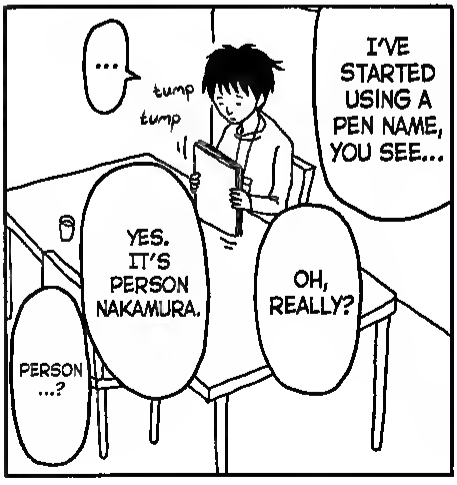
* Roughly $100

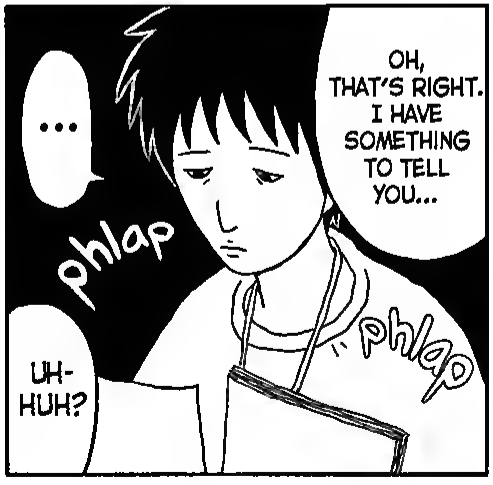
!

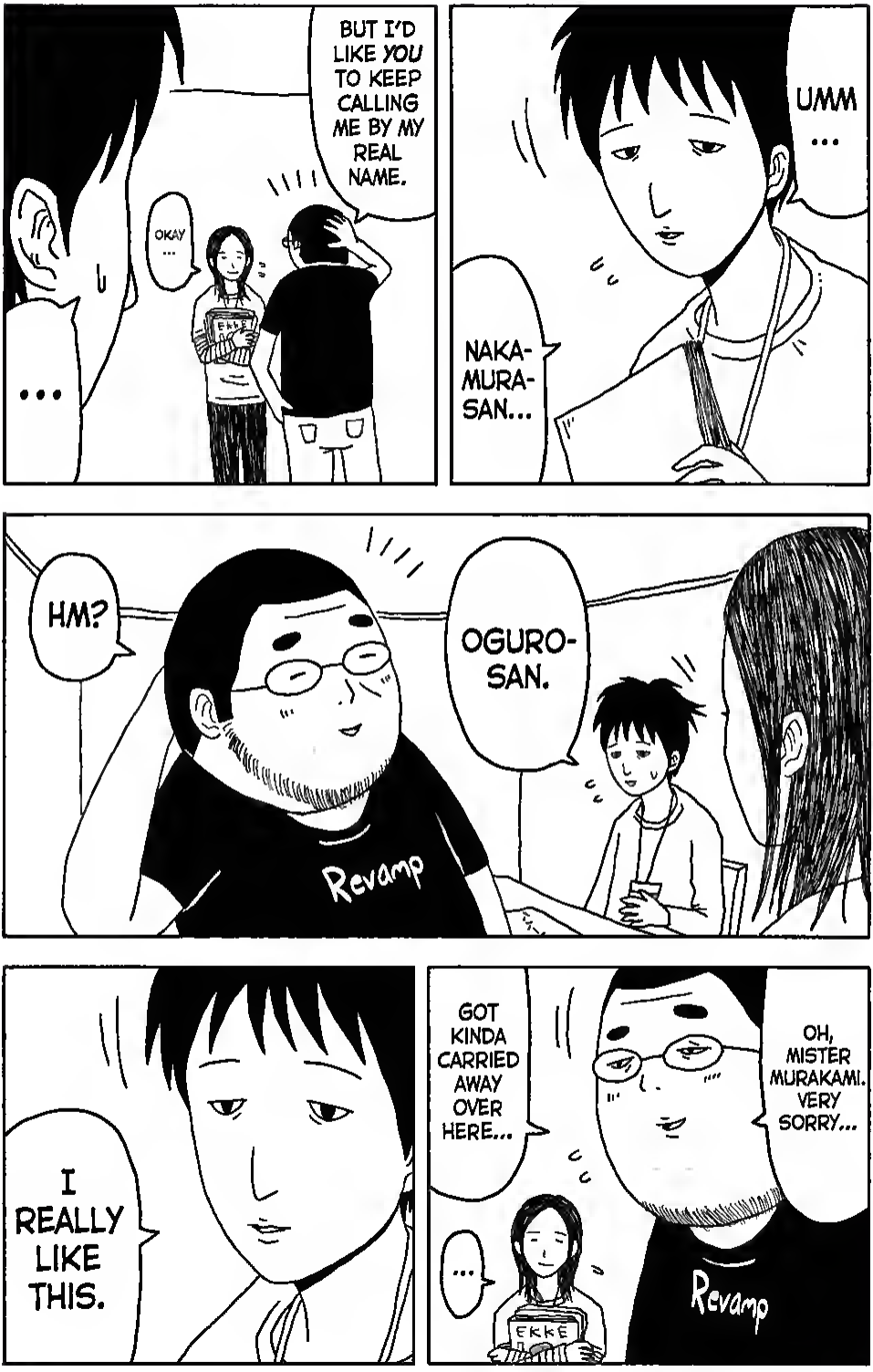

HELLO.


MEGURO-SAN!
HOW ARE YOU?

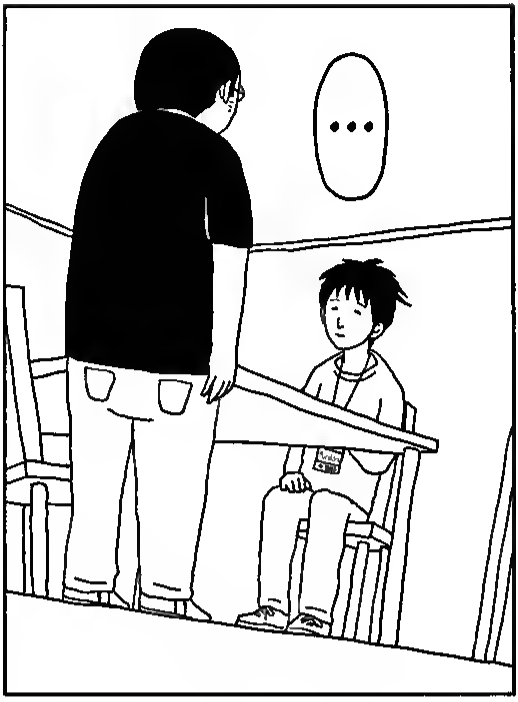

The other day
How about we start out as just friends?
JUST FINE! AND OH, MEGURO-SAN, THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING THE OTHER DAY...
OH, UH, NOT AT ALL!

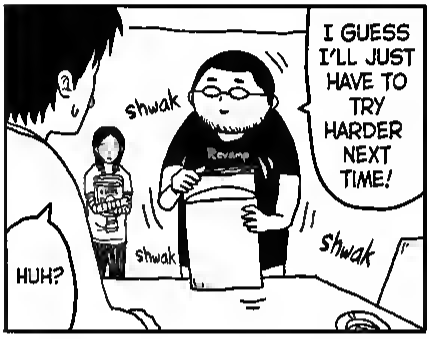

...
tump tump
I'VE STARTED USING A PEN NAME, YOU SEE...
YES. IT'S PERSON NAKAMURA.
OH, REALLY?
PERSON ...?

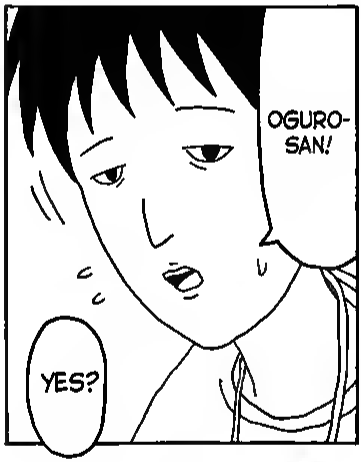

...
phlap
OH, THAT'S RIGHT. I HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL YOU...
phlap
UH-HUH?

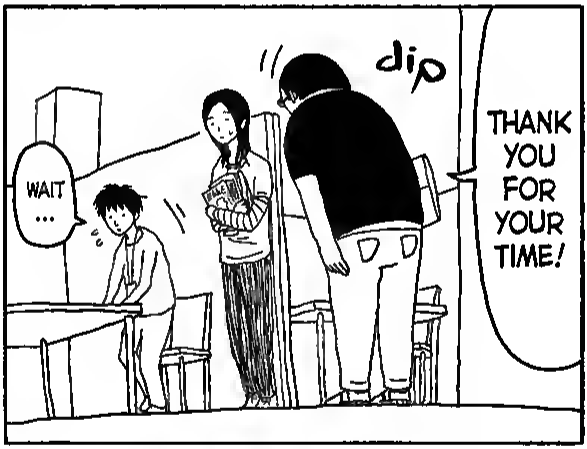

BUT I'D LIKE YOU TO KEEP CALLING ME BY MY REAL NAME.
OKAY ...
...
UMM ...
NAKA-MURA-SAN...
HM?
OGURO-SAN.
Revamp
I REALLY LIKE THIS.
GOT KINDA CARRIED AWAY OVER HERE...
OH, MISTER MURAKAMI. VERY SORRY...
...
EKKE
Revamp

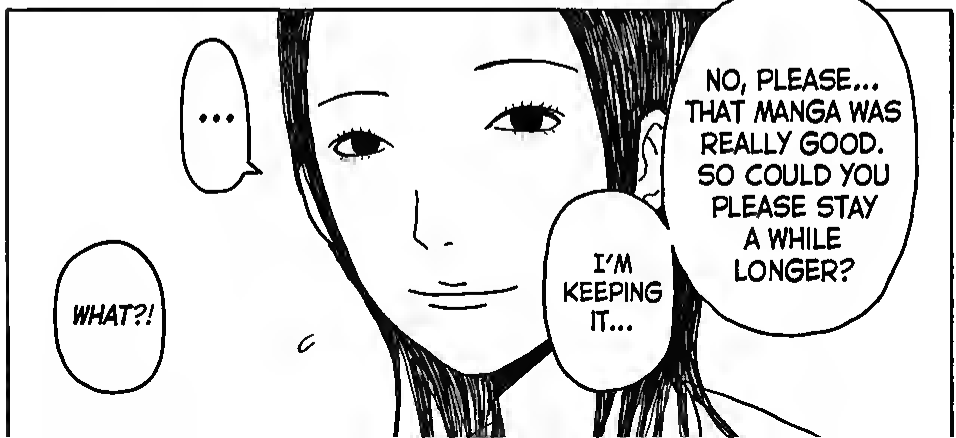
I knew it...
OH, REALLY? OKAY ...


...


shwak
shwak
shwak
I GUESS I'LL JUST HAVE TO TRY HARDER NEXT TIME!
HUH?

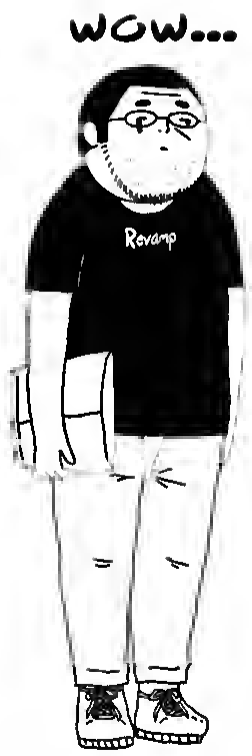

OGURO-SAN!
YES?


dip
WAIT ...
THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!


...
WHAT?!
I'M KEEPING IT...
NO, PLEASE... THAT MANGA WAS REALLY GOOD. SO COULD YOU PLEASE STAY A WHILE LONGER?

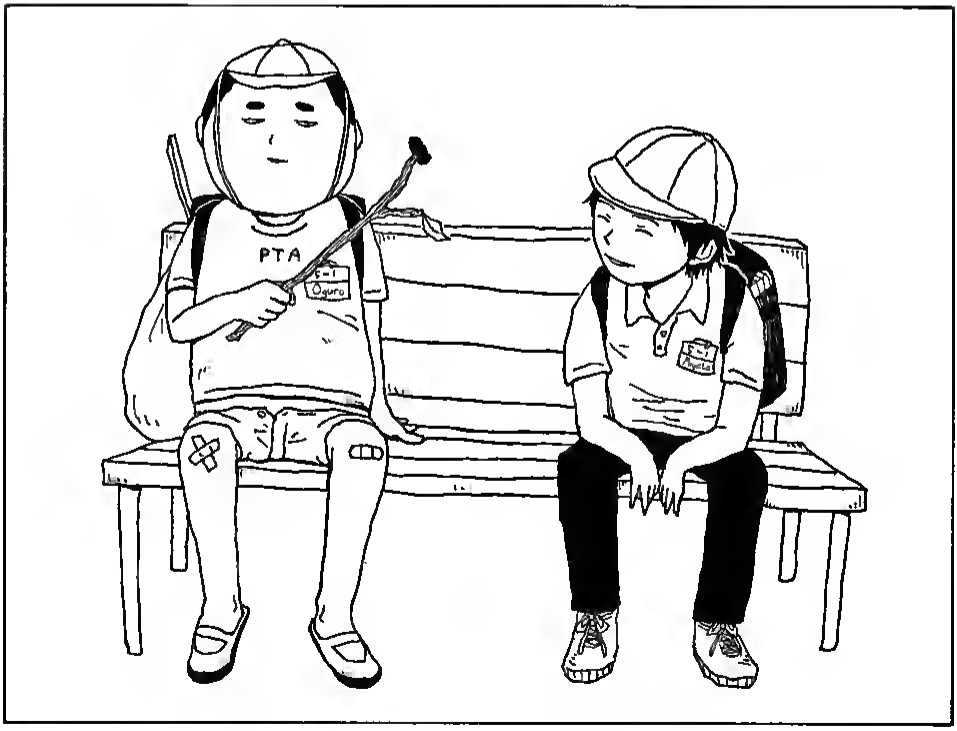
I REALLY LIKED THIS STORY...
Revamp
EKKE
IS THAT ...
EKKE Editorial
IS THAT FOR REAL ?!

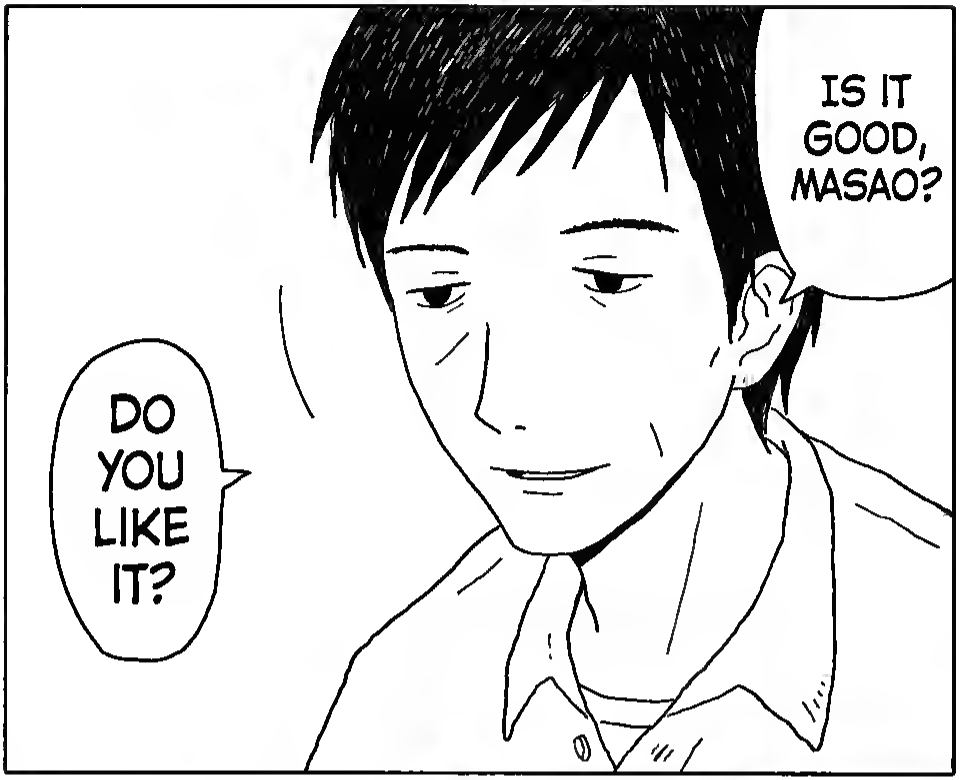
kweee
EKKE


WOW...
Revamp

Chapter 13:

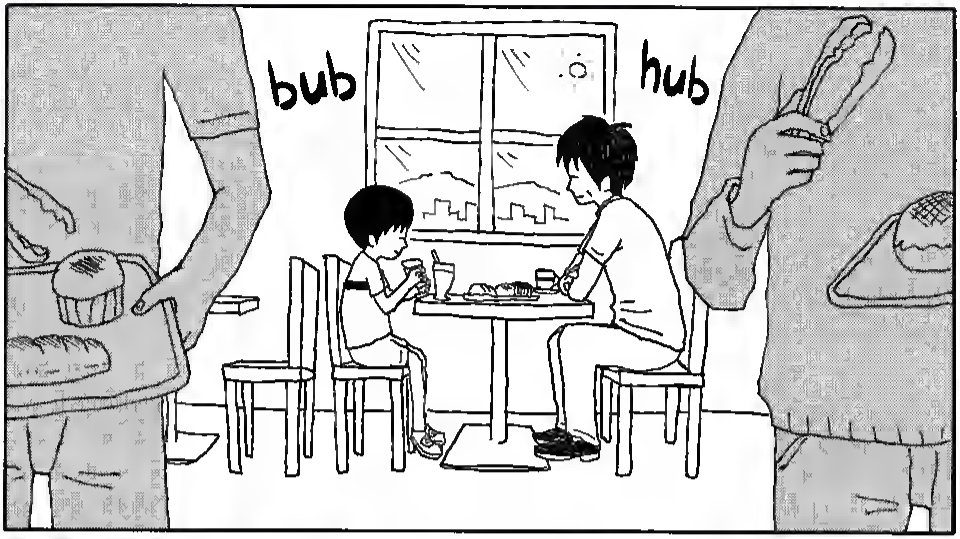
"Dad"

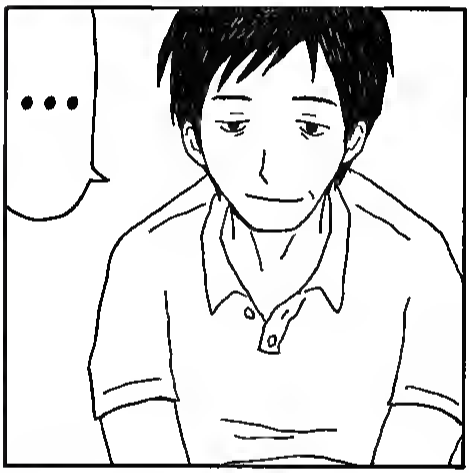


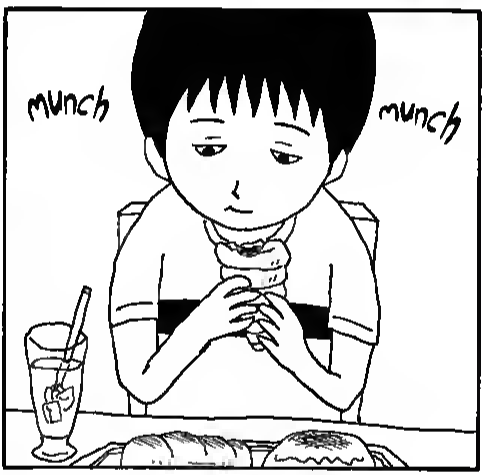

IS IT GOOD, MASAO?
DO YOU LIKE IT?

Bakery Cafe
Fallon
EAT AS MUCH AS YOU WANT, OKAY?
Bakery Cafe
Fallon
Sit down and enjoy our fresh-baked bread and pastries, straight from the oven!
Fallon
OKAY.

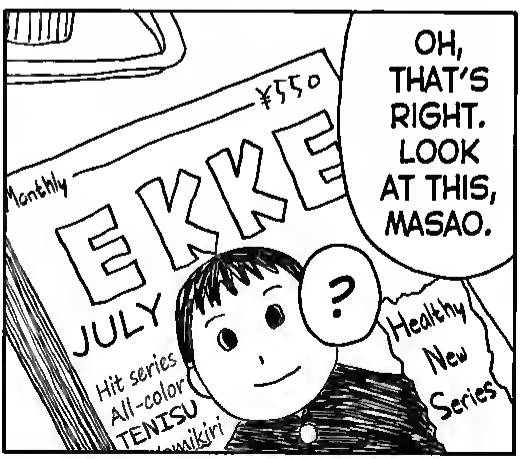
YEAH.
mwush
mwush

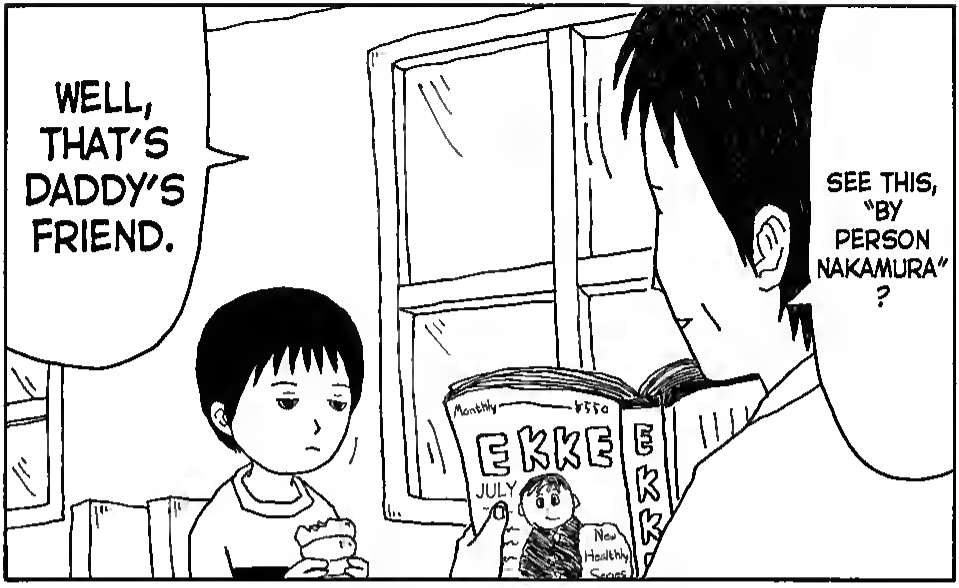

bub
hub

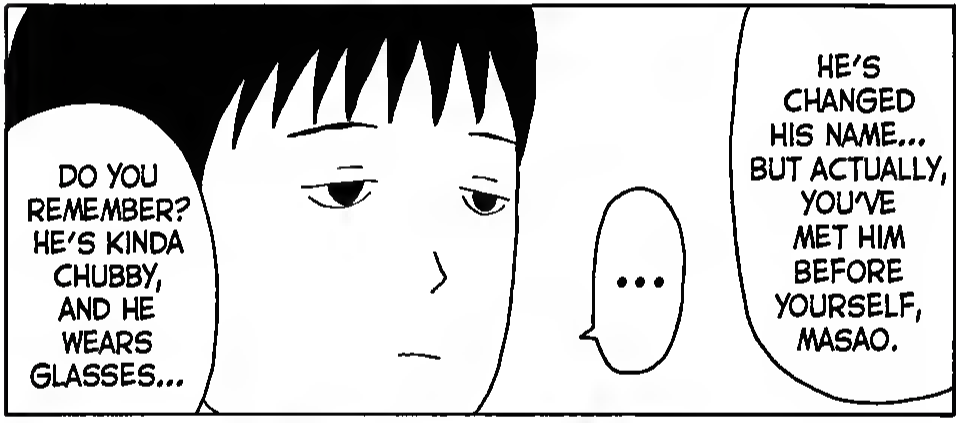

...

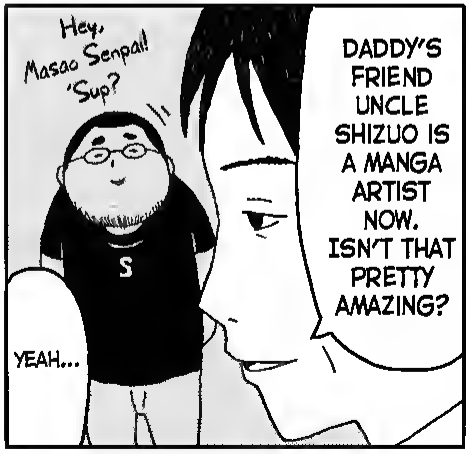

munch
munch

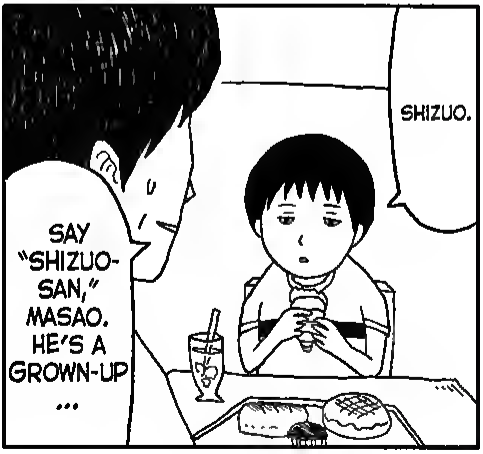
phlap
phlap
LET'S SEE... WHAT PAGE WAS IT ON...
...

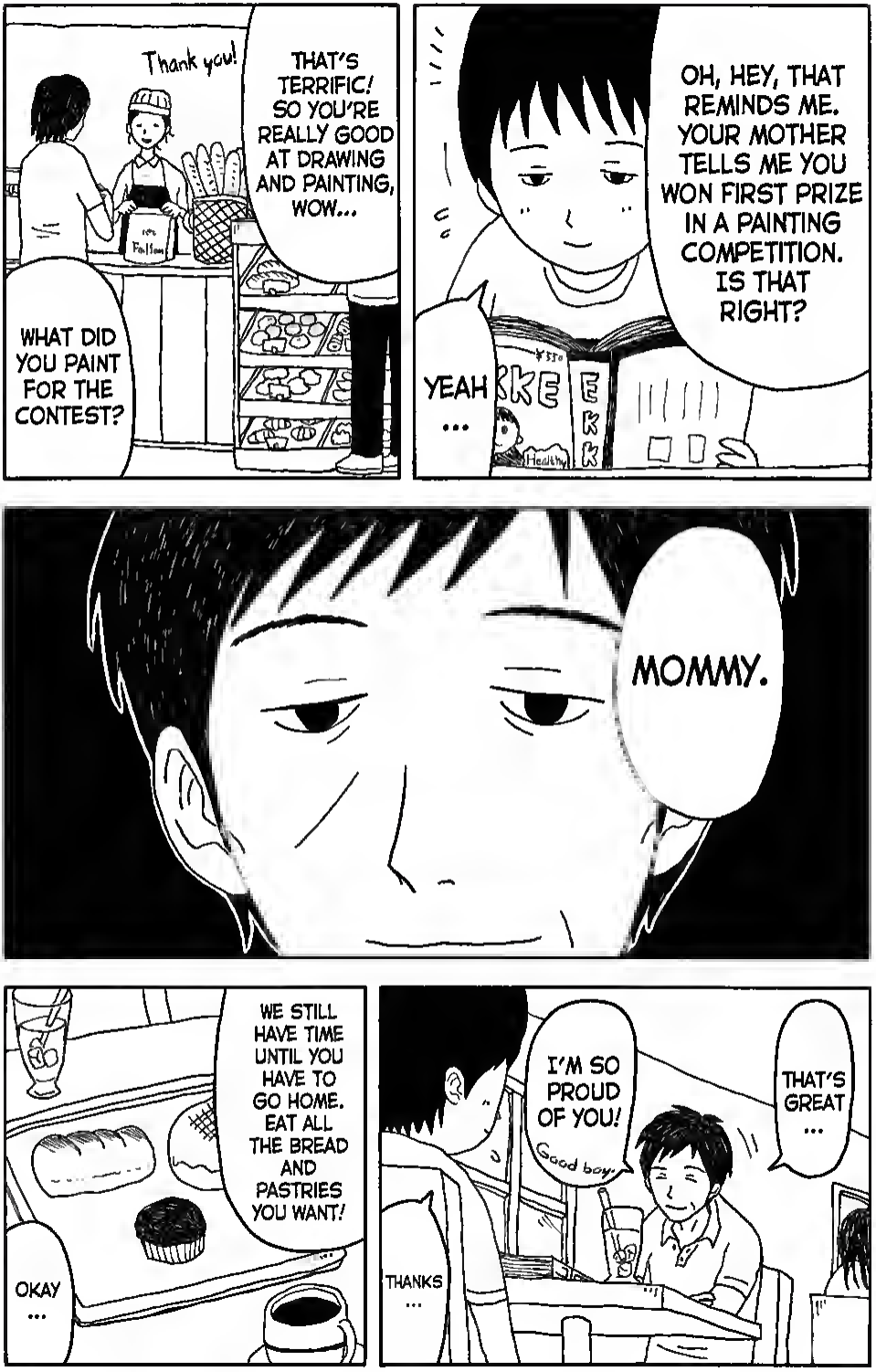

¥550
Monthly
EKKE
JULY
Hit series
All-color
TENISU
OH, THAT'S RIGHT. LOOK AT THIS, MASAO.
?
Healthy New Series


WELL, THAT'S DADDY'S FRIEND.
SEE THIS, "BY PERSON NAKAMURA"?
Monthly
EKKE
JULY
New Healthy Sweets
EKKE

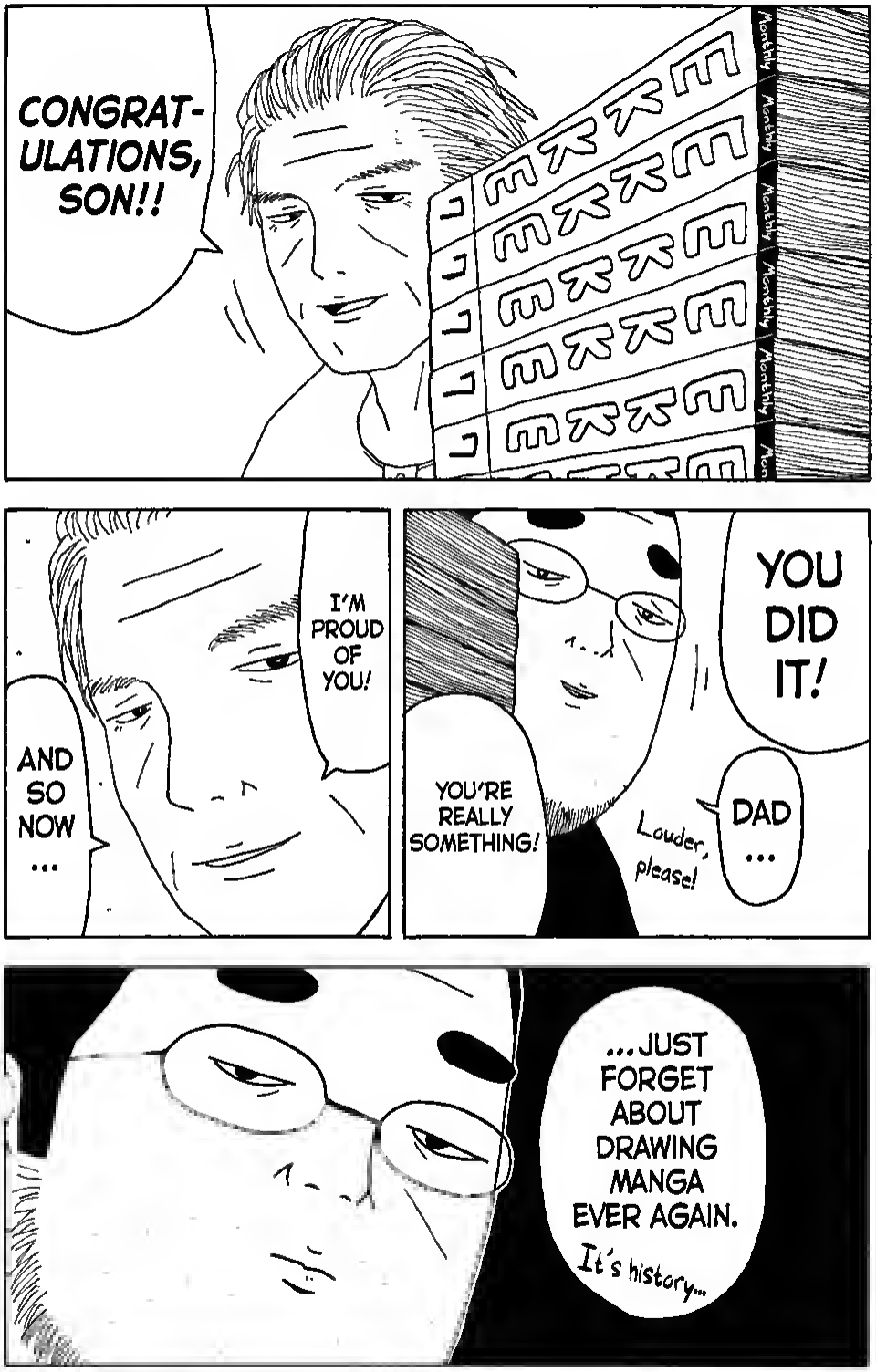

DO YOU REMEMBER? HE'S KINDA CHUBBY, AND HE WEARS GLASSES...
...
HE'S CHANGED HIS NAME... BUT ACTUALLY, YOU'VE MET HIM BEFORE YOURSELF, MASAO.

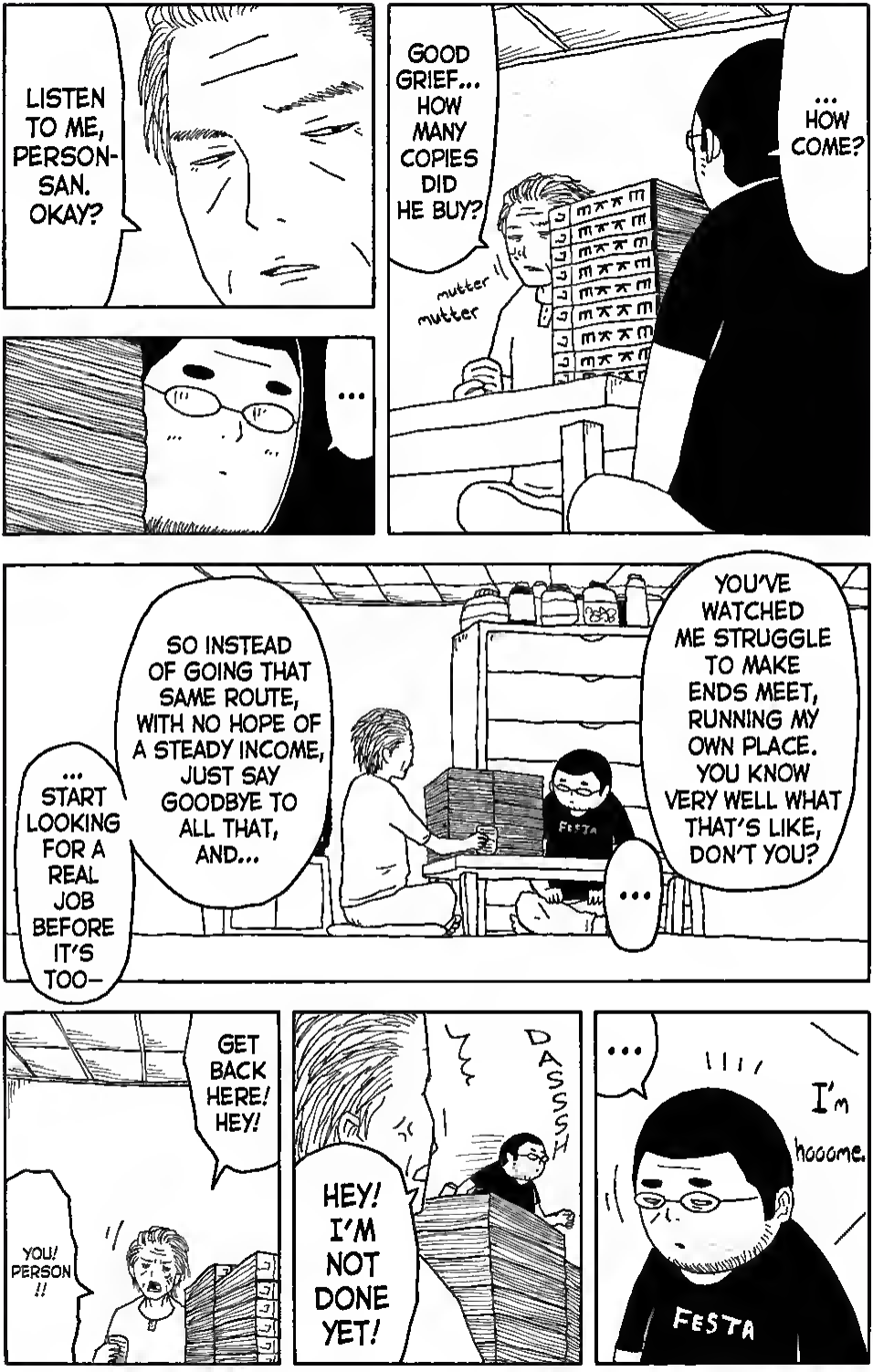

Hey, Masao Senpai! 'Sup?
DADDY'S FRIEND UNCLE SHIZUO IS A MANGA ARTIST NOW. ISN'T THAT PRETTY AMAZING?
YEAH...

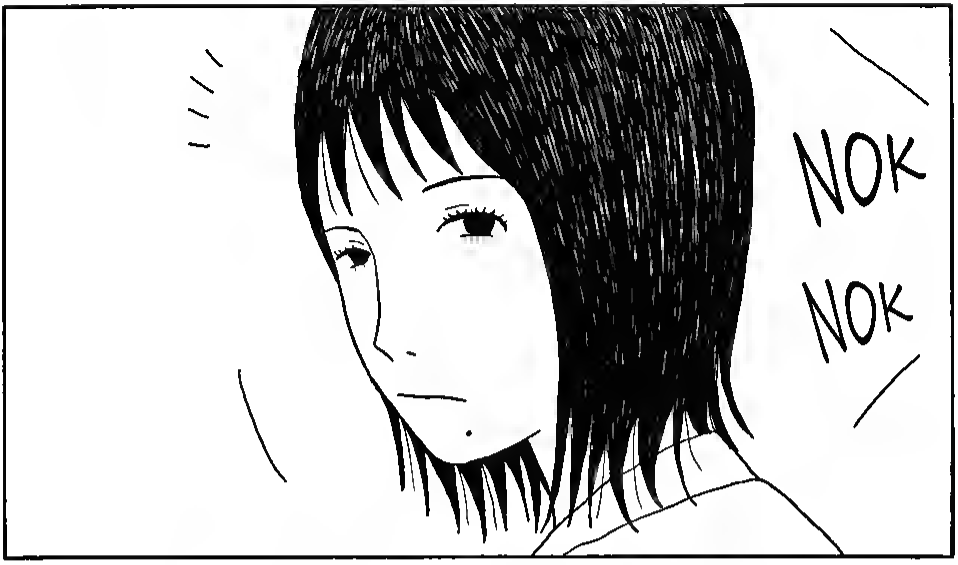

SHIZUO.
SAY "SHIZUO-SAN," MASAO. HE'S A GROWN-UP ...

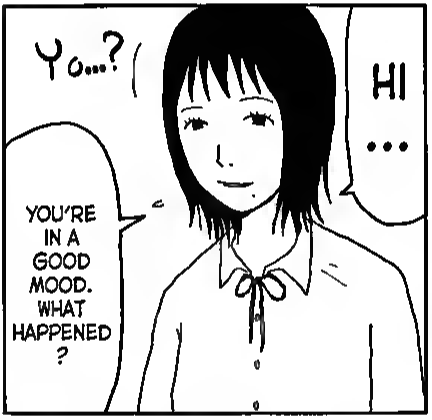

Thank you!
THAT'S TERRIFIC! SO YOU'RE REALLY GOOD AT DRAWING AND PAINTING, WOW...
WHAT DID YOU PAINT FOR THE CONTEST?
OH, HEY, THAT REMINDS ME. YOUR MOTHER TELLS ME YOU WON FIRST PRIZE IN A PAINTING COMPETITION. IS THAT RIGHT?
YEAH ...
MOMMY.
WE STILL HAVE TIME UNTIL YOU HAVE TO GO HOME. EAT ALL THE BREAD AND PASTRIES YOU WANT!
OKAY ...
I'M SO PROUD OF YOU!
Good boy.
THAT'S GREAT ...
THANKS ...

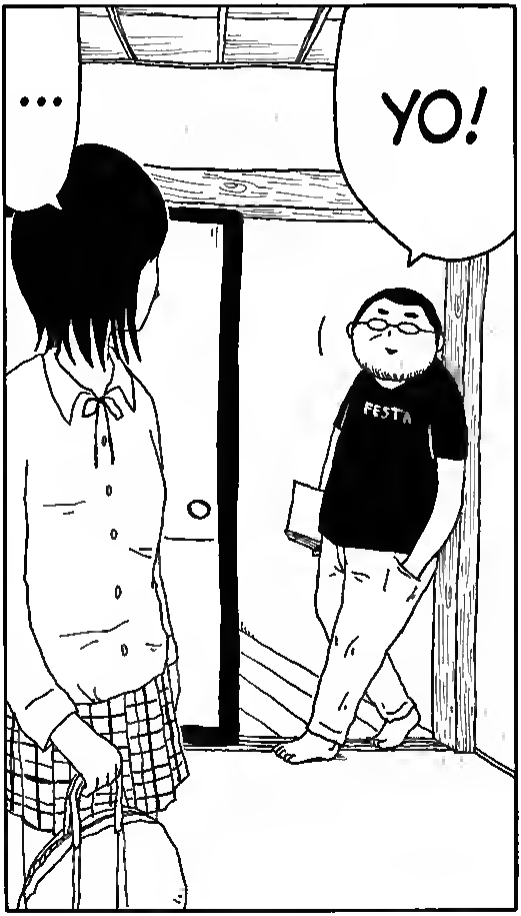
THE PAST 42 YEARS ...
kaw
kaw
I CAN'T IN ALL HONESTY SAY THAT I'VE BEEN A SON TO MAKE YOU PROUD...
AND I'M REALLY SORRY FOR ALL THE WORRIES AND ANXIETIES I'VE CAUSED YOU. DAD... AFTER ALL THESE YEARS...
FESTA
EKKE
Growth Phase
HERE. YOU. GO!

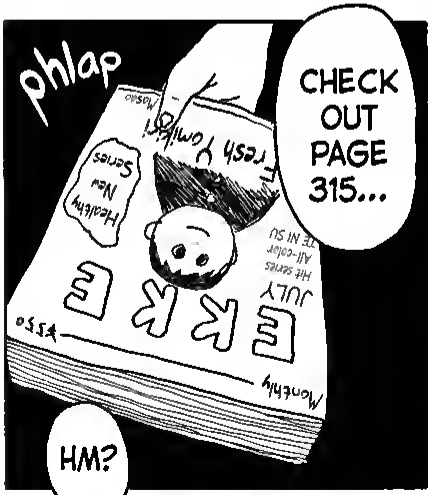

CONGRAT-ULATIONS, SON!!
Monthly
I'M PROUD OF YOU!
AND SO NOW ...
YOU DID IT!
DAD ...
Louder, please!
YOU'RE REALLY SOMETHING!
...JUST FORGET ABOUT DRAWING MANGA EVER AGAIN.
It's history...

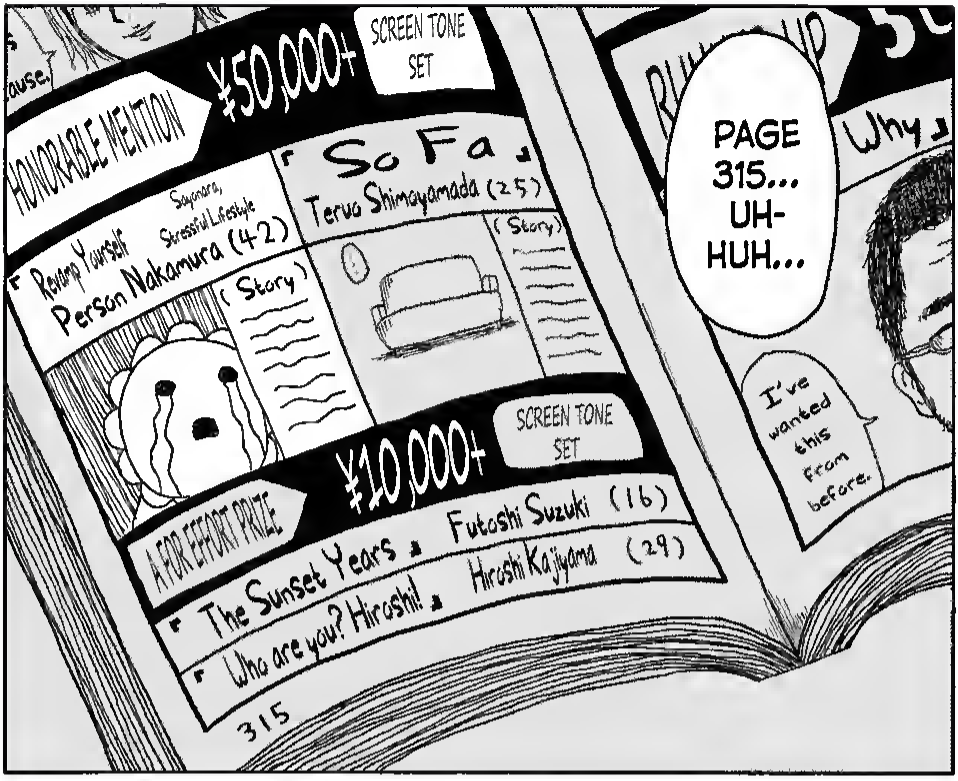

LISTEN TO ME, PERSON-SAN. OKAY?
...
GOOD GRIEF... HOW MANY COPIES DID HE BUY?
mutter mutter
... HOW COME?
... START LOOKING FOR A REAL JOB BEFORE IT'S TOO—
SO INSTEAD OF GOING THAT SAME ROUTE, WITH NO HOPE OF A STEADY INCOME, JUST SAY GOODBYE TO ALL THAT, AND...
YOU'VE WATCHED ME STRUGGLE TO MAKE ENDS MEET, RUNNING MY OWN PLACE. YOU KNOW VERY WELL WHAT THAT'S LIKE, DON'T YOU?
...
GET BACK HERE! HEY!
YOU! PERSON !!
DASSSH
HEY! I'M NOT DONE YET!
...
I'm hoooome.
FESTA


NOK
NOK

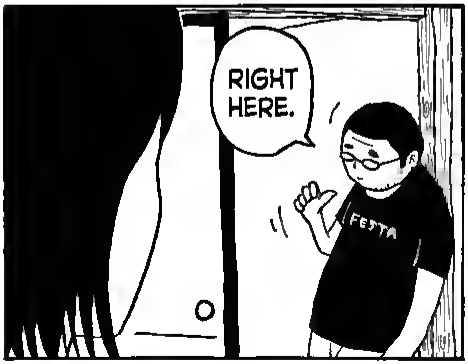

Yo...?
HI
...
YOU'RE IN A GOOD MOOD. WHAT HAPPENED ?


...
YO!
FESTA

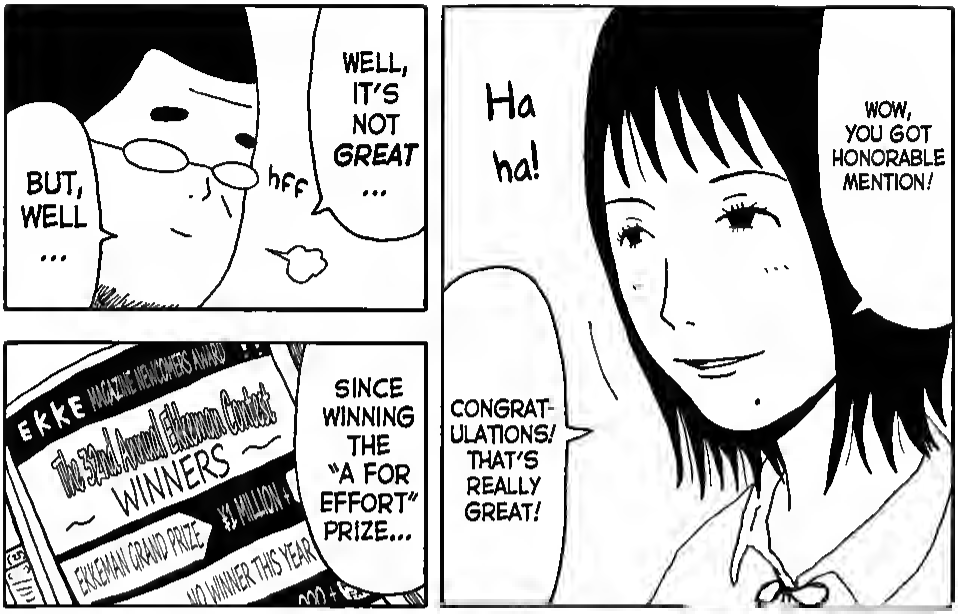

phlap
CHECK OUT PAGE 315...
HM?

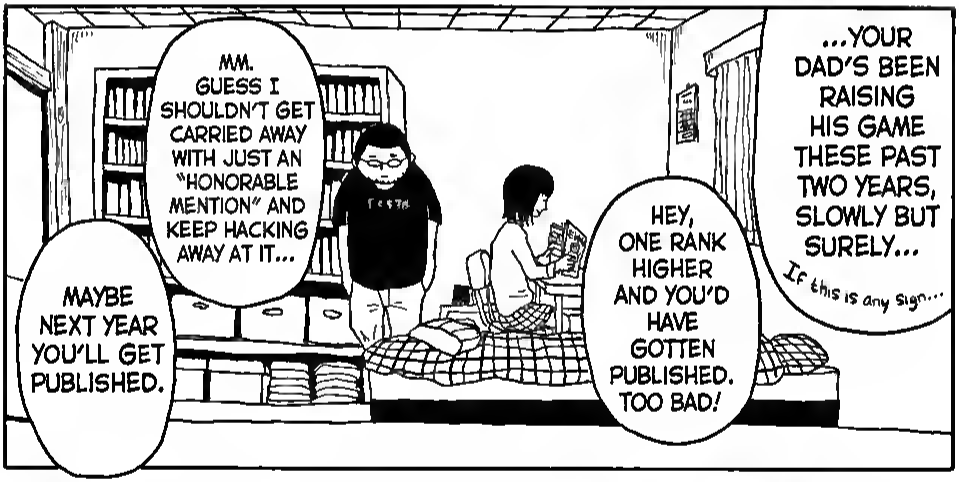

HONORABLE MENTION
¥50,000+
SCREEN TONE SET
Revamp Yourself — Person Nakamura (42)
Sayonara, Stressful Lifestyle
(Story)
「So Fa」
Teruo Shimayamada (25)
(Story)
A FOR EFFORT PRIZE
¥10,000+
SCREEN TONE SET
「The Sunset Years」 Futoshi Suzuki (16)
「Who are you? Hiroshi!」 Hiroshi Kajiyama (29)
315
PAGE 315... UH-HUH...
Why」
I've wanted this from before.

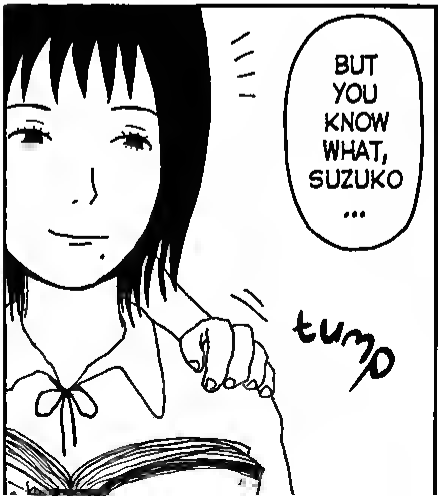
OH, DON'T TELL ME...
Revamp Yourself — Person Nakamura (42)
Sayonara, Stressful Lifestyle
PERSON ...?

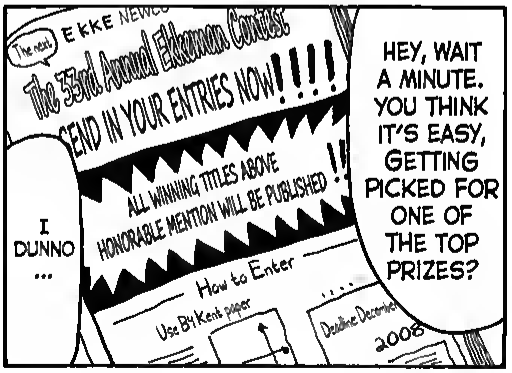

RIGHT HERE.
FESTA

?
PERSON NAKA-MURA...

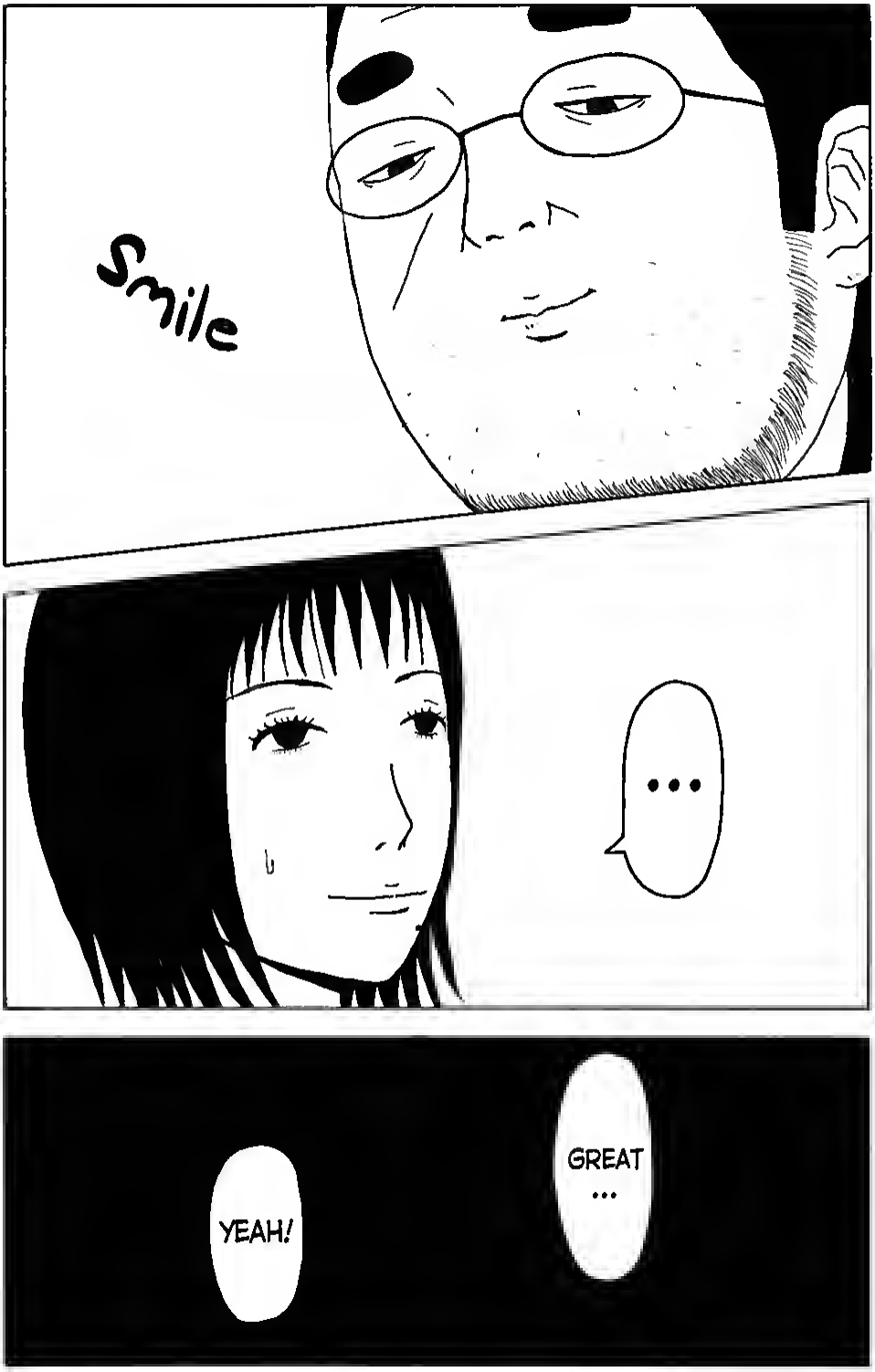

WELL, IT'S NOT GREAT ...
hff
BUT, WELL ...
WOW, YOU GOT HONORABLE MENTION!
Ha ha!
CONGRAT-ULATIONS! THAT'S REALLY GREAT!
EKKE MAGAZINE NEWCOMERS AWARD
The 33rd Annual Ekkoman Contest
WINNERS
¥3 MILLION
EKKEMAN GRAND PRIZE
NO WINNER THIS YEAR
SINCE WINNING THE "A FOR EFFORT" PRIZE...


MM. GUESS I SHOULDN'T GET CARRIED AWAY WITH JUST AN "HONORABLE MENTION" AND KEEP HACKING AWAY AT IT...
MAYBE NEXT YEAR YOU'LL GET PUBLISHED.
HEY, ONE RANK HIGHER AND YOU'D HAVE GOTTEN PUBLISHED. TOO BAD!
...YOUR DAD'S BEEN RAISING HIS GAME THESE PAST TWO YEARS, SLOWLY BUT SURELY...
If this is any sign...


BUT YOU KNOW WHAT, SUZUKO ...
tump


The new EKKE NEWCOMERS
The 33rd Annual Ekkoman Contest
SEND IN YOUR ENTRIES NOW!!!
ALL WINNING TITLES ABOVE HONORABLE MENTION WILL BE PUBLISHED!!
How to Enter
Use BH Kent paper
Deadline December 2008
I DUNNO ...
HEY, WAIT A MINUTE. YOU THINK IT'S EASY, GETTING PICKED FOR ONE OF THE TOP PRIZES?

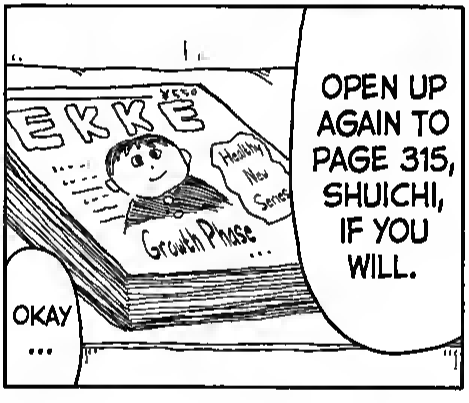
I'M ON A ROLL RIGHT NOW.

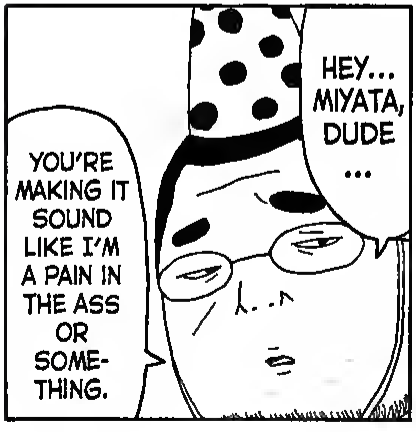

Smile
...
GREAT ...
YEAH!

302
Miyata
...
ALL THE SAME, THOUGH... HONORABLE MENTION ISN'T EXACTLY A PIECE OF CAKE, EITHER. IT'S NOT LIKE ANYBODY COULD JUST GO OUT AND WIN THAT.
shwzz
AS I'VE ALREADY SAID MANY TIMES THIS EVENING, I WAS JUST ONE STEP AWAY FROM PUBLICATION, BUT NO CIGAR.
WELL ...
YEAH.
WHAT'S *YOUR* VIEW OF THAT, SHUICHI?

RIGHT?
YEAH.
生 BEER
生 BEER
生 BEER

NOW, SHUICHI. BASICALLY, EVERY SUCCESSFUL MANGA—
COME ON, SHIZUO ...


OPEN UP AGAIN TO PAGE 315, SHUICHI, IF YOU WILL.
EKKE
Healthy New Series
Growth Phase
OKAY ...


HEY... MIYATA, DUDE ...
YOU'RE MAKING IT SOUND LIKE I'M A PAIN IN THE ASS OR SOME-THING.

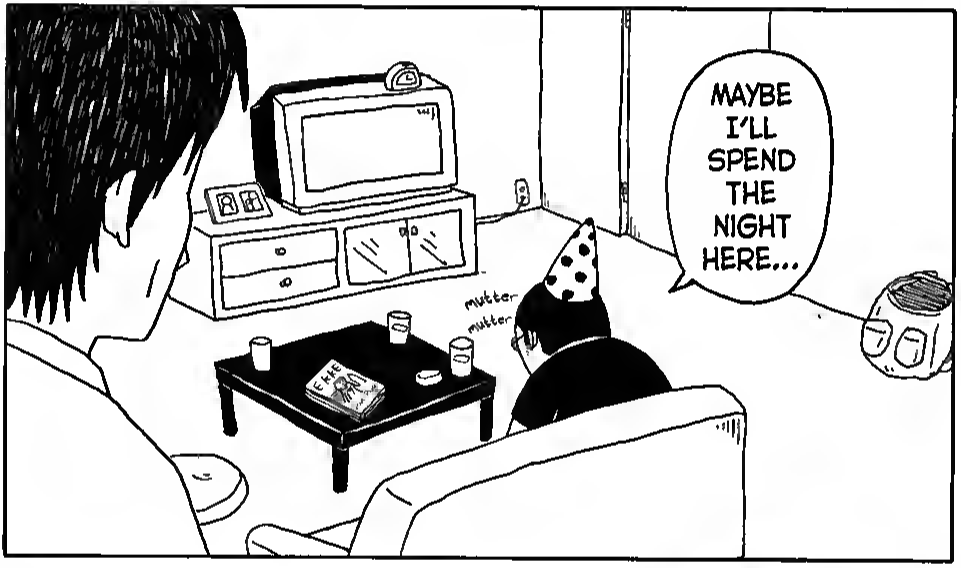
It's okay...
GIVE IT A REST, WILL YOU? POOR ICHINOSAWA-KUN...
HOW MANY TIMES ARE YOU GOING TO MAKE HIM SAY "YEAH"?

HAVE YOU HAD ENOUGH TO EAT, ICHINO-SAWA-KUN?
OH, YEAH.
Totally.
HERE, I GRILLED UP SOME SAUSAGES FOR YOU, SHIZUO. YOUR BIG FAVORITE ...
So calm down.
THEY AREN'T MY "BIG FAVORITE"!
YOU'RE A REALLY GREAT COOK, OSAMU-SAN.
EVERY-THING YOU MADE WAS SUPER GOOD.
...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, THE ONE THING?
Osamu
COOKING'S THE ONE THING OSAMU-SAN HERE IS GOOD AT.
Right?
...
THAT'S MY SON.

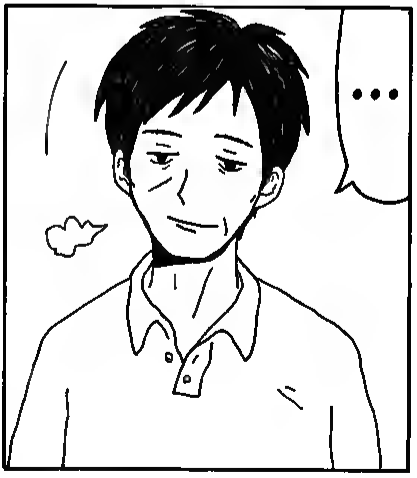
I'M DIVORCED TOO, YOU SEE...
...
HE DOESN'T LIVE WITH ME, THOUGH ...
ha ha
krnch krnch
OH ...
JUST LIKE SHIZUO ...
krnch krnch
...
WHAT WAS YOUR KID'S NAME? HARUYOSHI?
krnch
NO...
And you know it.
IGNORE HIM, ICHINOSAWA-KUN. HIS NAME IS MASAO.
OKAY ... Ha ha...

shup
UM, I THINK I BETTER GET GOING.
WHA-AAT ?!
FESTA
TOK
TIK
SORRY... BUT I'M MEETING MY SISTER TOMORROW, SO...
WE'RE GOING OVER TO OUR FOLKS' PLACE TOGETHER, TO SAY HI...
THANKS FOR DINNER.
You must be worn out from that.
TAKE CARE, THEN.
UH, SURE ...
And give her this!
SAY HI TO YOUR SISTER FOR ME...
UH-HUH ?
rummage
rummage
OKAY, SO HANG ON A SEC...

WHAT ABOUT YOU? NOT GOING HOME YET?

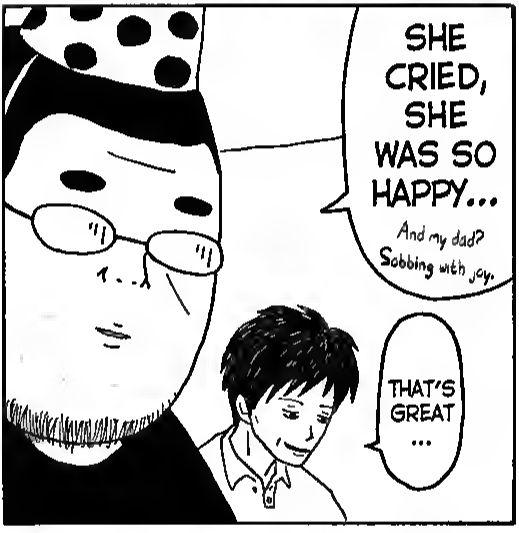

MAYBE I'LL SPEND THE NIGHT HERE...
mutter mutter

YOU WANT TO TAKE A BATH? IT'S READY TO GO.
NAH. I TOOK ONE YESTER-DAY.
OKAY ...

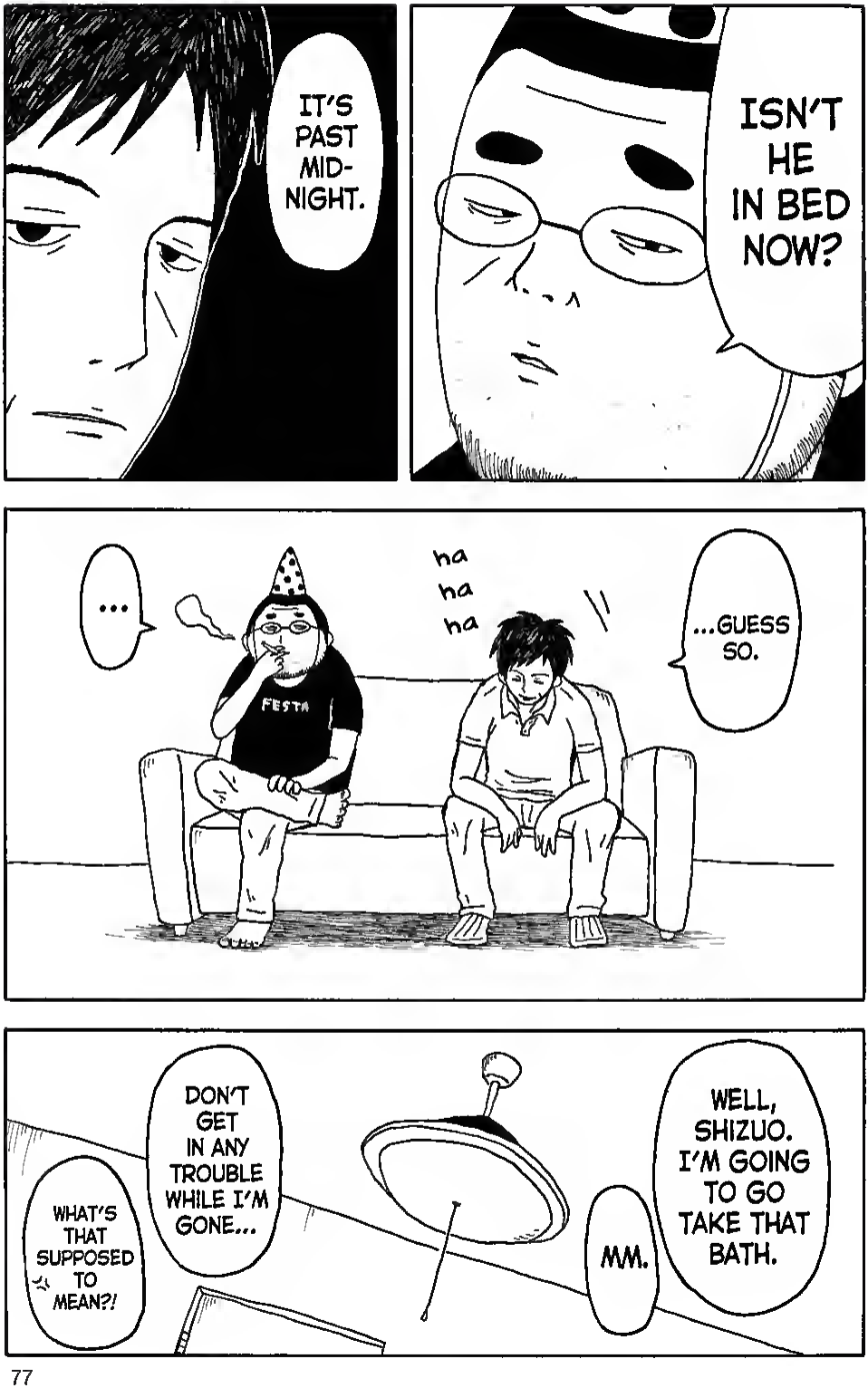

...

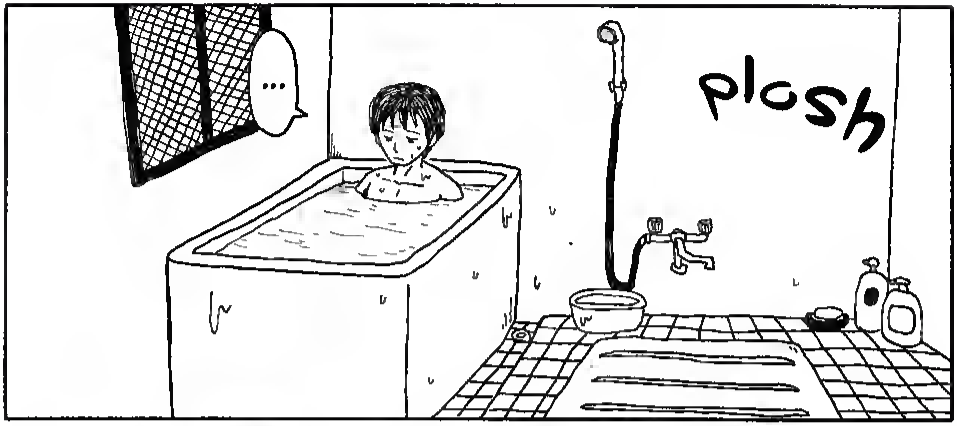
Monthly
EKKE
JULY
Hit series
All-color
TE NI SU
Fresh Yomikiri
Hop Step
Phase
WAS SUZUKO-CHAN EXCITED ABOUT IT?
YEAH.
BUT HEY, I'M REALLY GLAD FOR YOU. THAT YOU WON THIS.

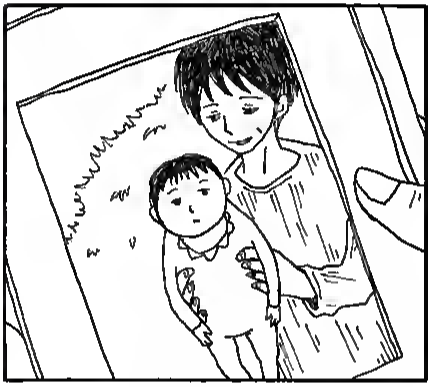
I WONDER ...
FESTA

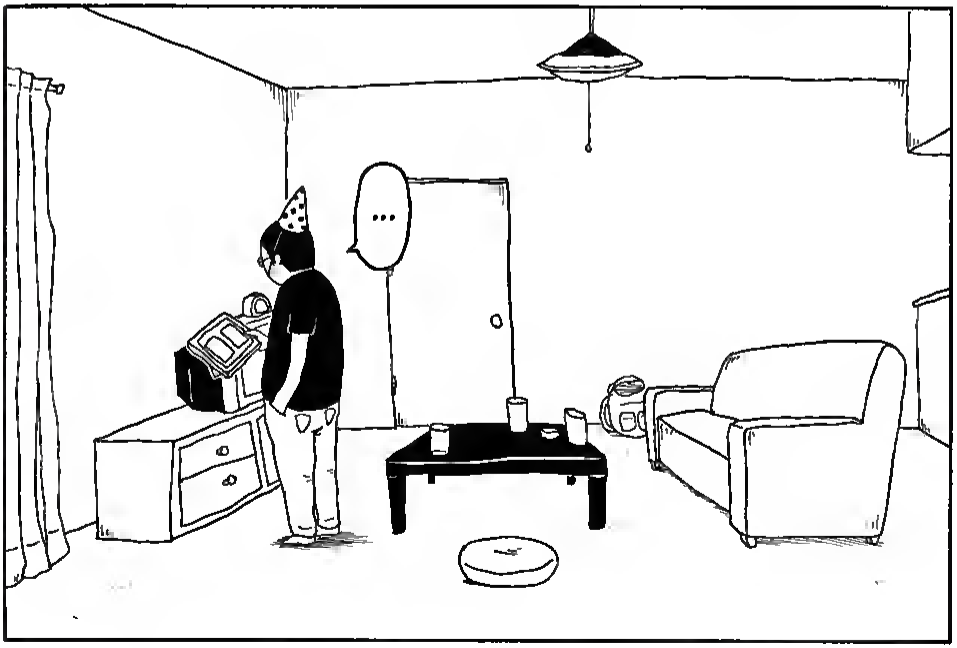

SHE CRIED, SHE WAS SO HAPPY...
And my dad? Sobbing with joy.
THAT'S GREAT ...

...
I WONDER HOW MASAO SEES ME NOW... WHAT'S HE THINK OF ME?


IT'S PAST MID-NIGHT.
ISN'T HE IN BED NOW?
...
ha ha ha
FESTA
...GUESS SO.
DON'T GET IN ANY TROUBLE WHILE I'M GONE...
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?!
MM.
WELL, SHIZUO. I'M GOING TO GO TAKE THAT BATH.


...
plosh

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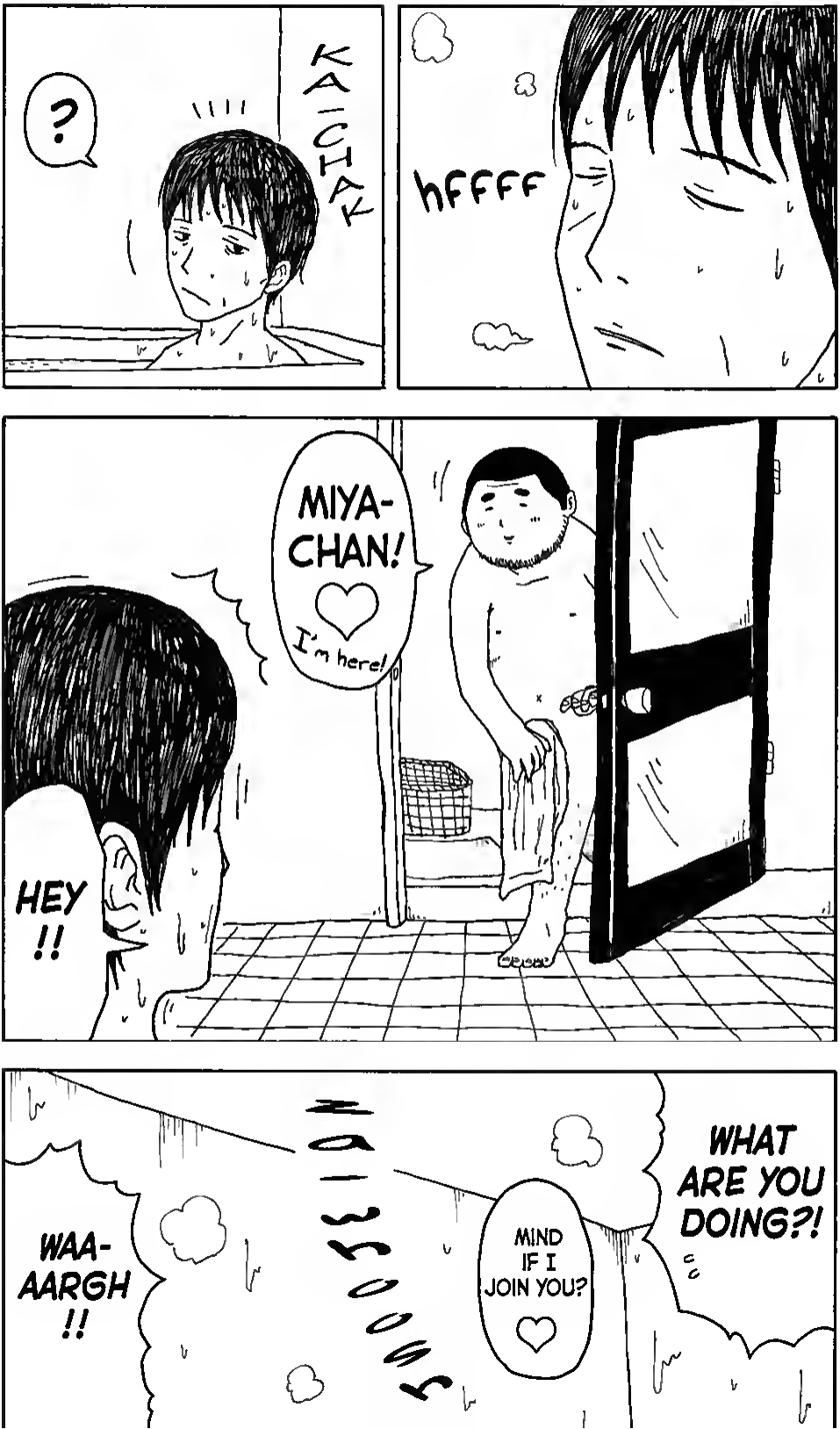
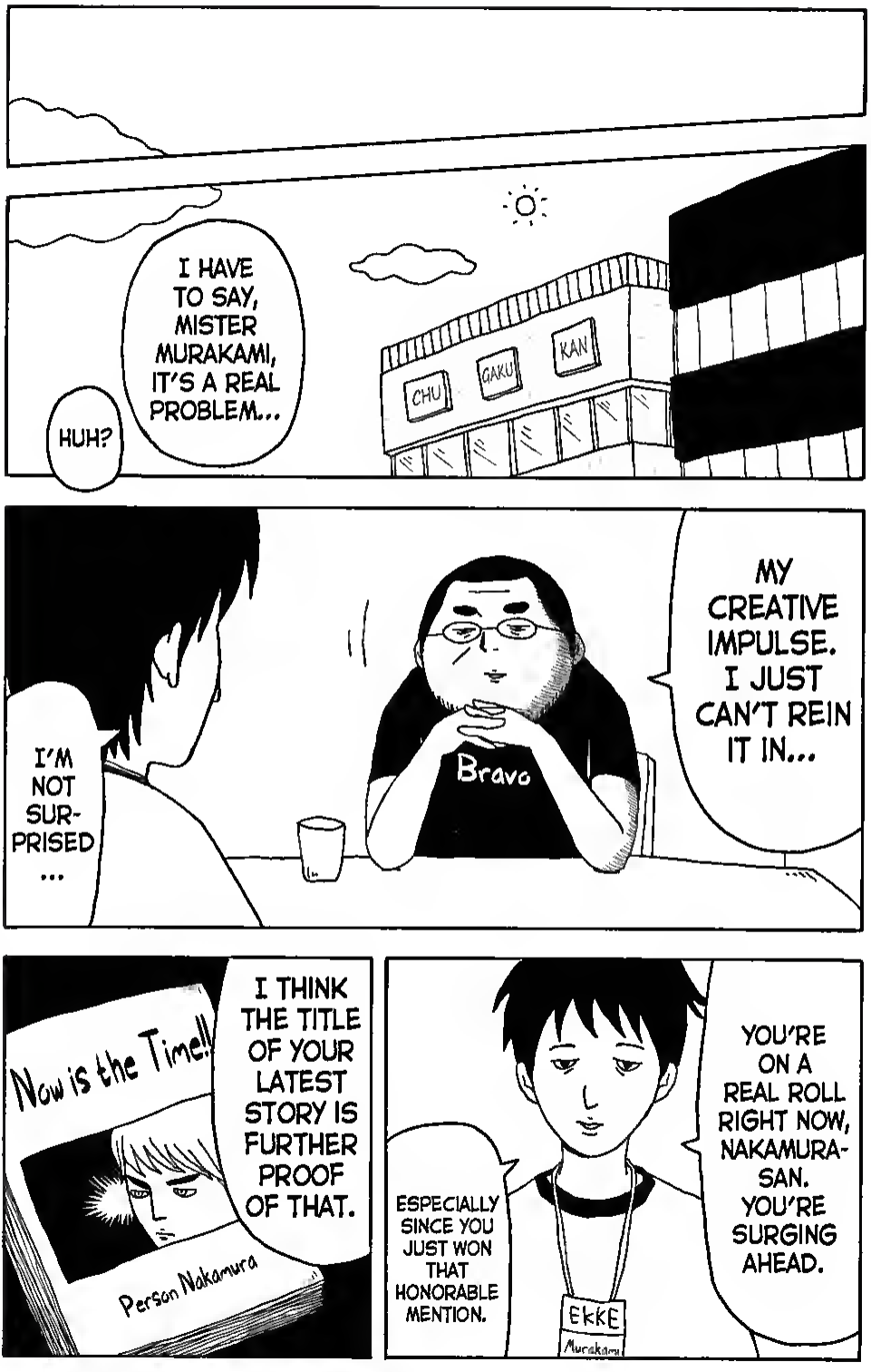
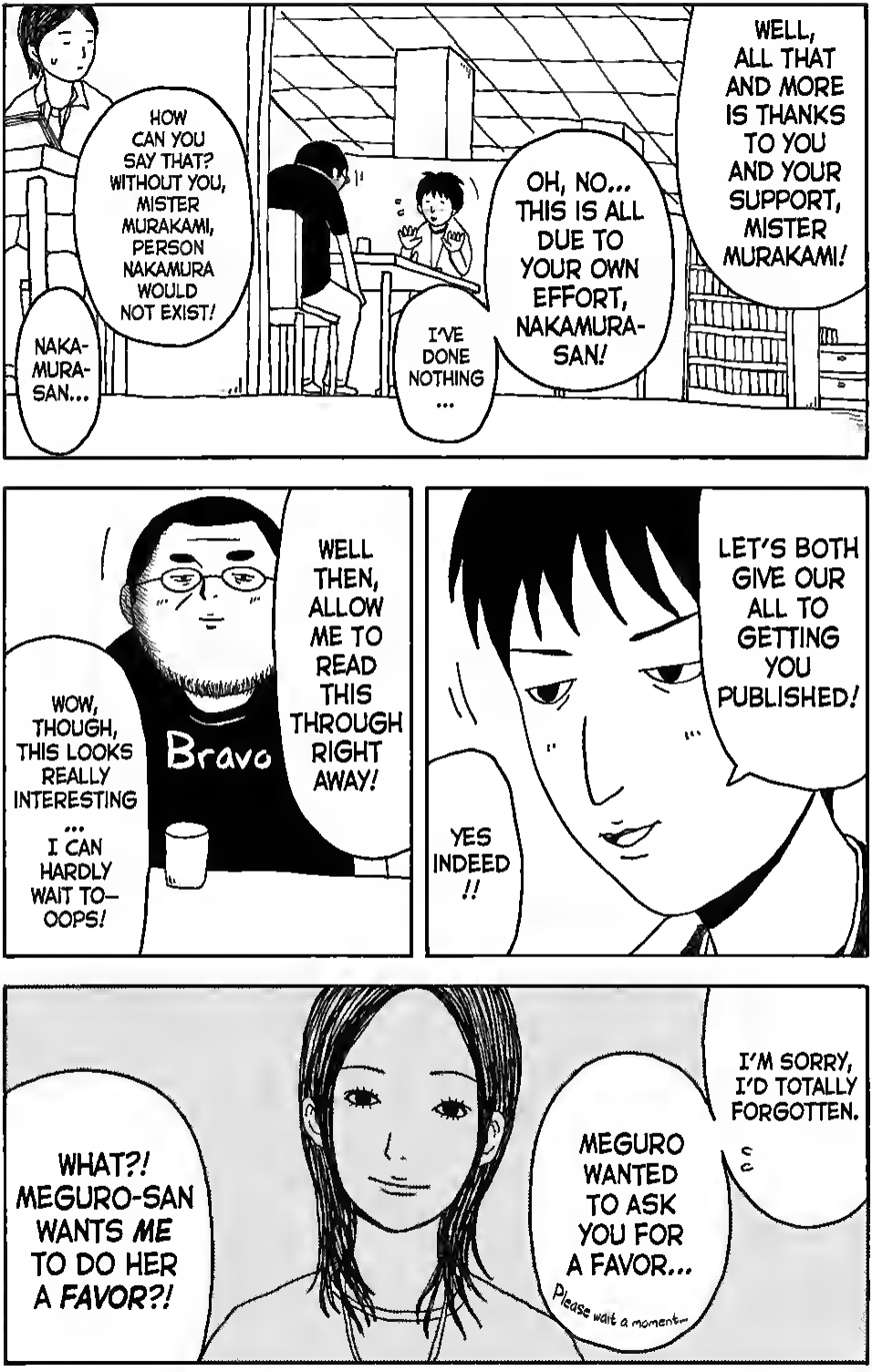
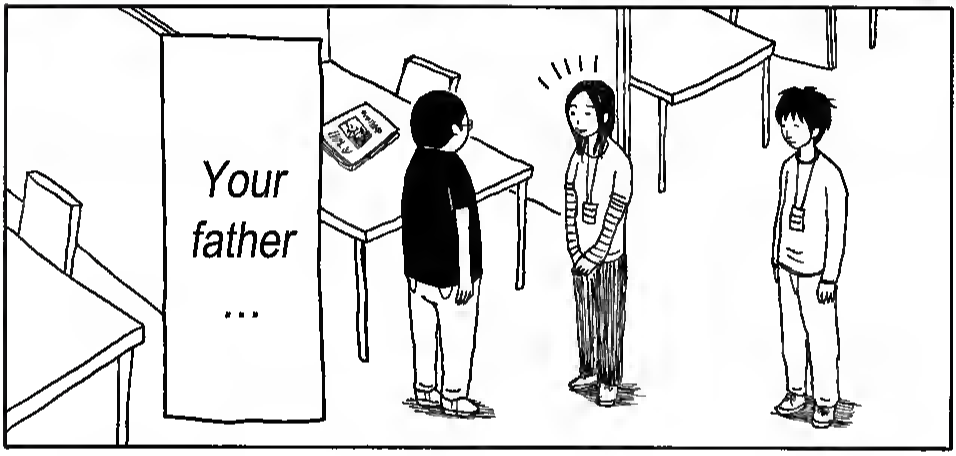

?
KA-CHAK
hffff
MIYA-CHAN!
I'm here!
HEY !!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
MIND IF I JOIN YOU?
WAA-AARGH !!


I HAVE TO SAY, MISTER MURAKAMI, IT'S A REAL PROBLEM...
HUH?
CHU
GAKU
KAN
MY CREATIVE IMPULSE. I JUST CAN'T REIN IT IN...
Bravo
I'M NOT SUR-PRISED ...
I THINK THE TITLE OF YOUR LATEST STORY IS FURTHER PROOF OF THAT.
Now is the Time!!
Person Nakamura
YOU'RE ON A REAL ROLL RIGHT NOW, NAKAMURA-SAN. YOU'RE SURGING AHEAD.
ESPECIALLY SINCE YOU JUST WON THAT HONORABLE MENTION.
EKKE
Murakami


NAKA-MURA-SAN...
HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT? WITHOUT YOU, MISTER MURAKAMI, PERSON NAKAMURA WOULD NOT EXIST!
I'VE DONE NOTHING ...
OH, NO... THIS IS ALL DUE TO YOUR OWN EFFORT, NAKAMURA-SAN!
WELL, ALL THAT AND MORE IS THANKS TO YOU AND YOUR SUPPORT, MISTER MURAKAMI!
WOW, THOUGH, THIS LOOKS REALLY INTERESTING ... I CAN HARDLY WAIT TO— OOPS!
Bravo
WELL THEN, ALLOW ME TO READ THIS THROUGH RIGHT AWAY!
YES INDEED !!
LET'S BOTH GIVE OUR ALL TO GETTING YOU PUBLISHED!
WHAT?! MEGURO-SAN WANTS *ME* TO DO HER A *FAVOR*?!
MEGURO WANTED TO ASK YOU FOR A FAVOR...
Please wait a moment...
I'M SORRY, I'D TOTALLY FORGOTTEN.

Suzuko
...


Your father ...

...is on a major roll!!
I'D BE HAPPY TO!

YOO-HOOOOO!!!

S

Chapter 14:

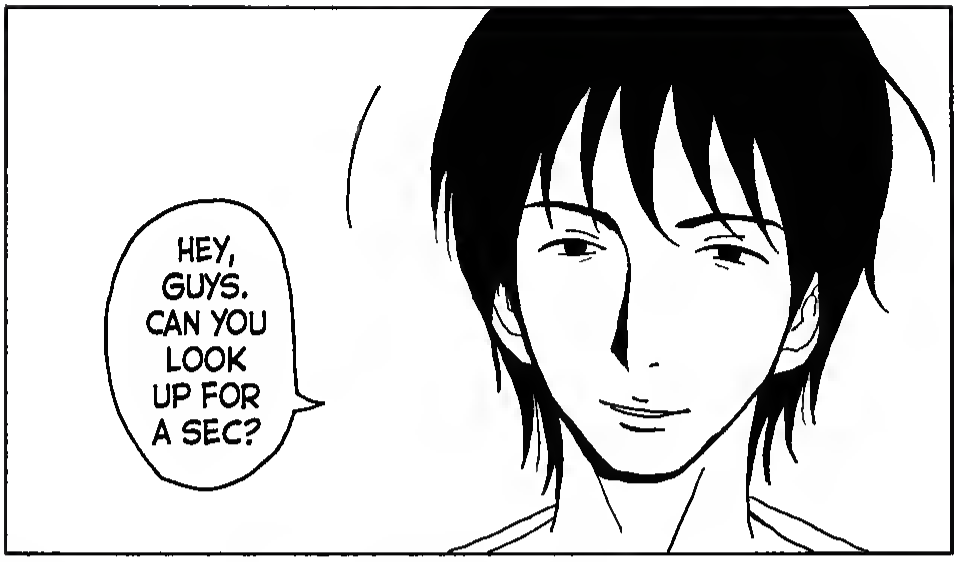
The Dignity of Middle Age

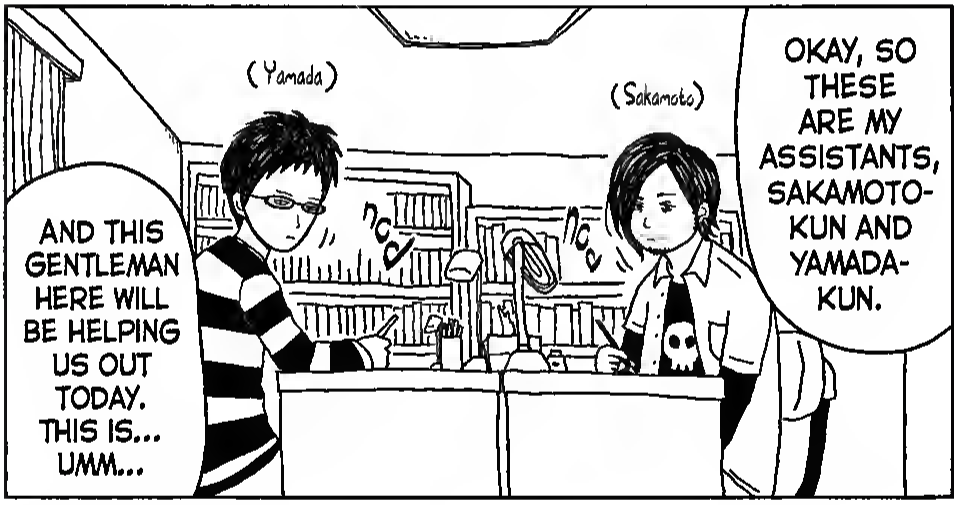
Chapter 14
The Dignity of Middle Age

I'm up in the hills.

Middle age is all about being surrounded by hills.

I ask the hills.
WHY WHY WHY ?!
...
Why
why
why
The hills answer.
And I remember.
Why Why
why why
why why


HEY, GUYS. CAN YOU LOOK UP FOR A SEC?


(Yamada)
(Sakamoto)
OKAY, SO THESE ARE MY ASSISTANTS, SAKAMOTO-KUN AND YAMADA-KUN.
AND THIS GENTLEMAN HERE WILL BE HELPING US OUT TODAY. THIS IS... UMM...

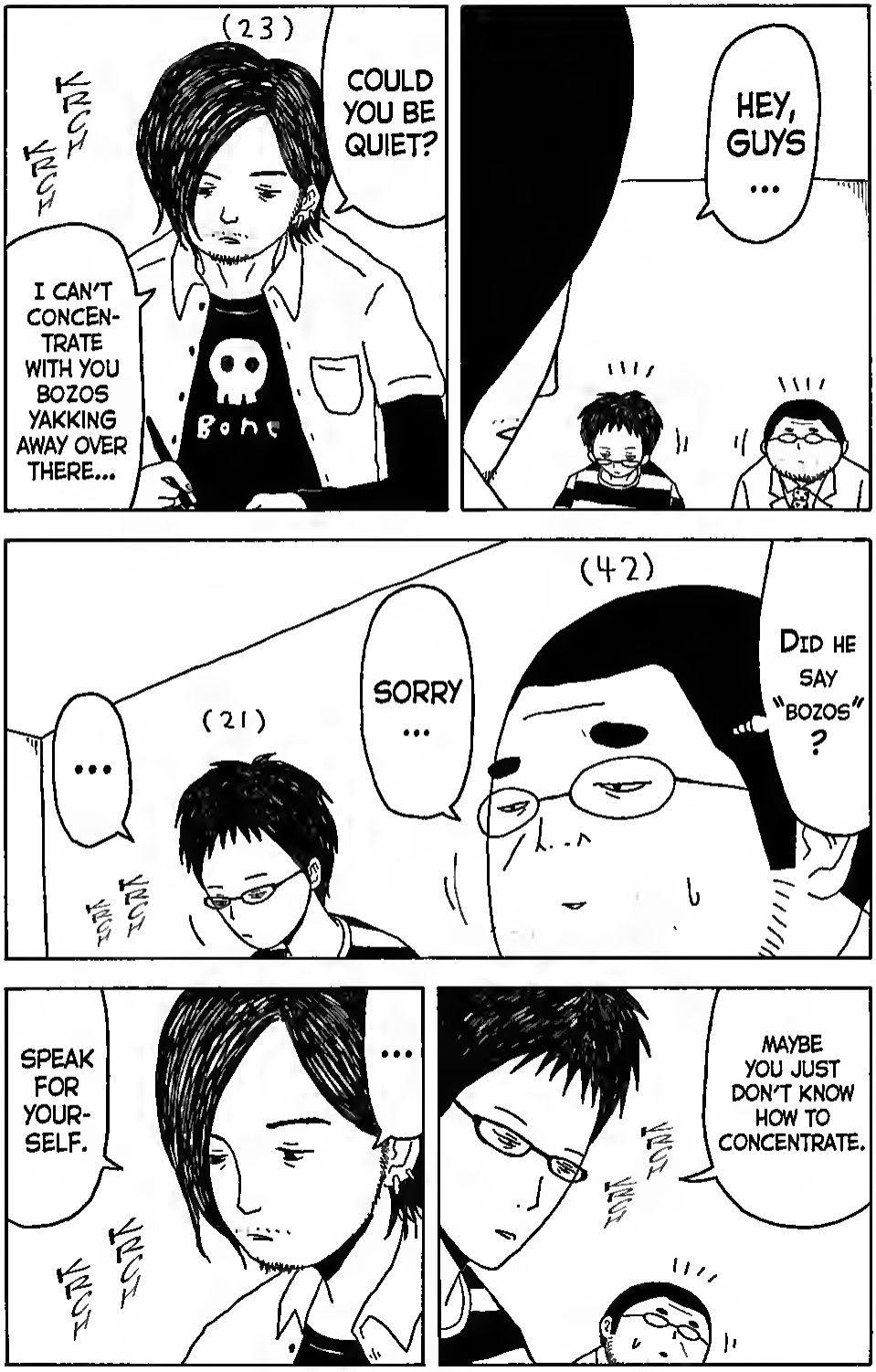
... NAKAMURA-SAN.
HOW DO YOU DO?

NICE TO MEET YOU. MY NAME IS PERSON NAKAMURA.
I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU!
OH, THIS IS NOTHING SPECIAL, BUT PLEASE.
SWUP
SAME HERE, RIGHT?
NICE TO MEET YOU.
KRCH KRCH
KRCH KRCH
IT DOESN'T KEEP, SO PLEASE DIG IN!
Manju
OH, UH, THANK YOU.
I'm middle-aged, and I'm very considerate.

I BROUGHT YOU MY LATEST STORY.
A tour de force.
I BELIEVE IT'S A GOOD INDICATION OF MY CAPA-BILITIES.
WELL THEN, SORRY TO PLUNGE RIGHT IN, BUT...
COULD YOU SHOW ME SOME OF YOUR WORK?
So I can see your skill level.
AND PLEASE, DON'T HOLD BACK. I'M PREPARED TO DO ANYTHING YOU ASK, SENSEI.
GREAT. THANKS.
ONE THING I PRIDE MYSELF ON HAVING IS AN UNFLAPPABLE WILLINGNESS TO TRY ANYTHING!
...
Now Is the Time!!
WELL THEN, NAKAMURA-SAN, I'D LIKE YOU TO BE IN CHARGE OF ERASING PENCIL OUTLINES.
YES, SIR!
THANK YOU.
GREAT, I THINK I GOT IT.
NOT AT ALL.

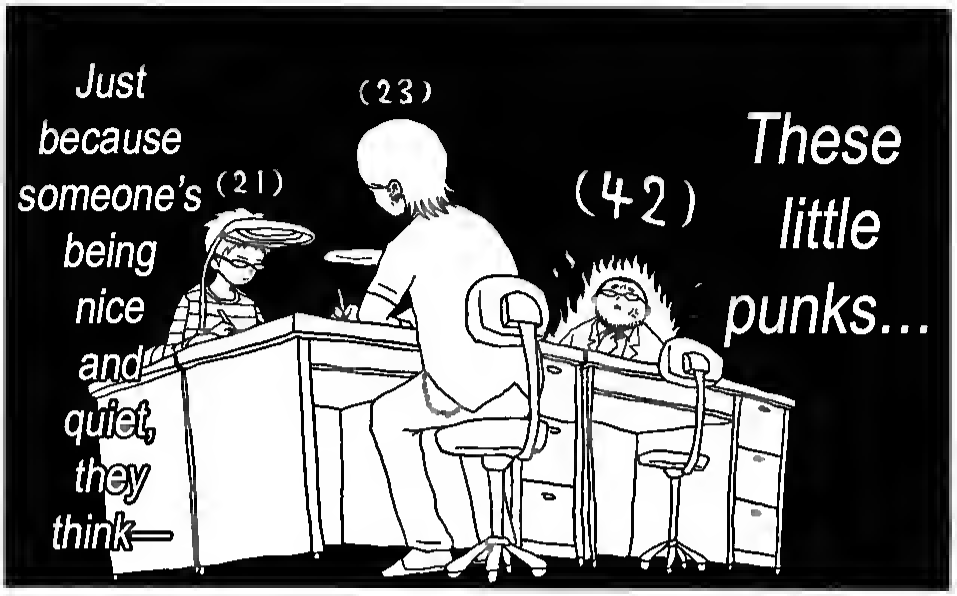
1:00 p.m.
ISN'T IT HARD TO WORK LIKE THAT?
HEH?
RUB
RUB
RUB
flik
...
RUB
RUB
WEARING A SUIT.
NO ...

(42)
(21)
HOW OLD ARE YOU?
FORTY-TWO...
HAVE YOU BEEN DRAWING MANGA A LONG TIME?
ABOUT TWO YEARS ...
TWO YEARS?
THAT'S NOT VERY LONG.
Considering you're 42.
NO, IT'S NOT ...
RUB
RUB
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN TO YOU?
NO, NOT REALLY ...
Nothing...
YOU HAVEN'T BEEN PUBLISHED YET, RIGHT?
RIGHT ...
WOW, THAT TAKES GUTS...
...
KRCH
KRCH
RUB
RUB


(23)
COULD YOU BE QUIET?
KRCH KRCH
I CAN'T CONCEN-TRATE WITH YOU BOZOS YAKKING AWAY OVER THERE...
HEY, GUYS ...
(42)
(21)
SORRY ...
...
DID HE SAY "BOZOS"?
KRCH KRCH
SPEAK FOR YOUR-SELF.
...
KRCH KRCH
MAYBE YOU JUST DON'T KNOW HOW TO CONCENTRATE.
KRCH KRCH

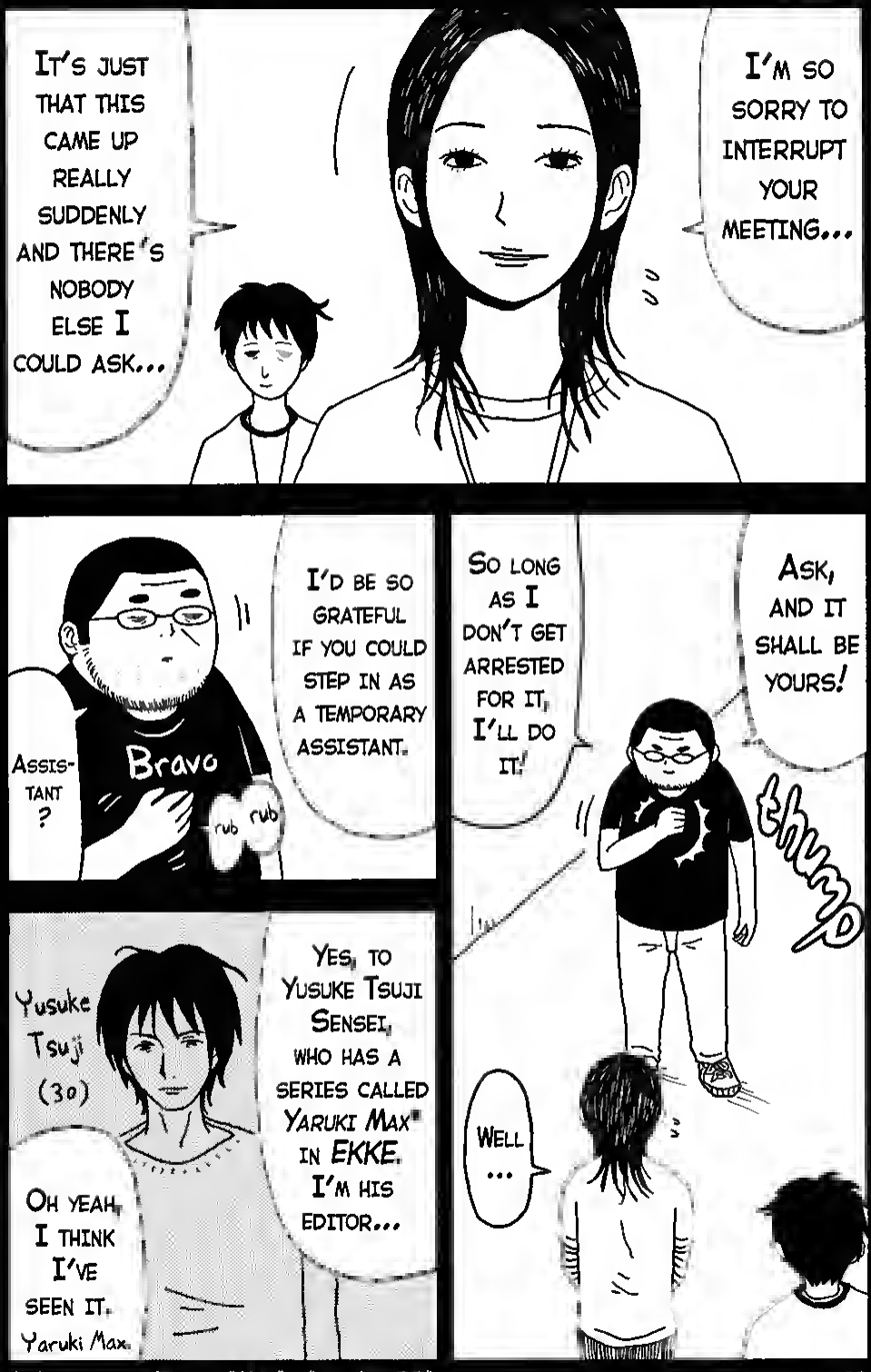
YOU JUST CAN'T TELL WHAT'S GOOD AND WHAT'S BAD, THAT'S ALL.
THE MANGA YOU LIKE ARE ALL REALLY BAD TOO, AREN'T THEY?
WHAT'S IT TO YOU WHAT I LISTEN TO, ANYWAY?
THAT REALLY WANKY STUFF YOU LIKE.
AND IF YOU CAN'T CONCENTRATE, WHY DON'T YOU LISTEN TO SOME MUSIC OR SOMETHING, LIKE YOU ALWAYS DO...
I DON'T, AS A MATTER OF FACT.
WHY DO YOU THINK YOU'RE BETTER THAN EVERYBODY, SAKAMOTO-SAN?
KRCH
...
Total silence...
SENSEI ?
EXCUSE ME? YOU MUST BE DREAMING, DUDE.
I THINK I CAN TELL WAY BETTER THAN YOU CAN, SAKAMOTO-SAN.
Aren't you going to stop them?
I'm middle-aged, and I'm very conciliatory.
HEY THERE, YOU TWO. LET'S NOT FIGHT!
Jeez! Guess I got no choice...

HEY, POPS ...
IF YOU DON'T WORK FASTER, WE AREN'T GOING TO MAKE THOSE DEADLINES.
You're taking too much time.
EXCUSE ME?
LIKE, WE AREN'T FIGHTING ?
So they turn on me ?!
What the hell ?!


Just because someone's being nice and quiet, they think—
(21)
(23)
(42)
These little punks...

Don't go there!
halt
Ulp...

You have to fulfill the vow you made to Meguro-san...
hff
hff
Grit your teeth, Person!

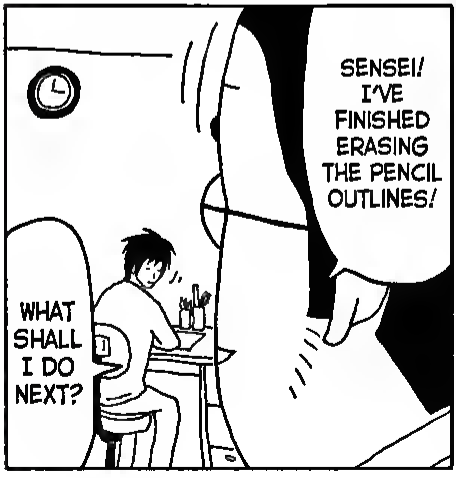

I'm so sorry to interrupt your meeting...
It's just that this came up really suddenly and there's nobody else I could ask...
I'd be so grateful if you could step in as a temporary assistant.
Bravo
rub rub
Assis-tant ?
Ask, and it shall be yours!
So long as I don't get arrested for it, I'll do it!
thump
Well ...
Yes, to Yusuke Tsuji Sensei, who has a series called Yaruki Max* in EKKE. I'm his editor...
Yusuke Tsuji (30)
Oh yeah, I think I've seen it. Yaruki Max.

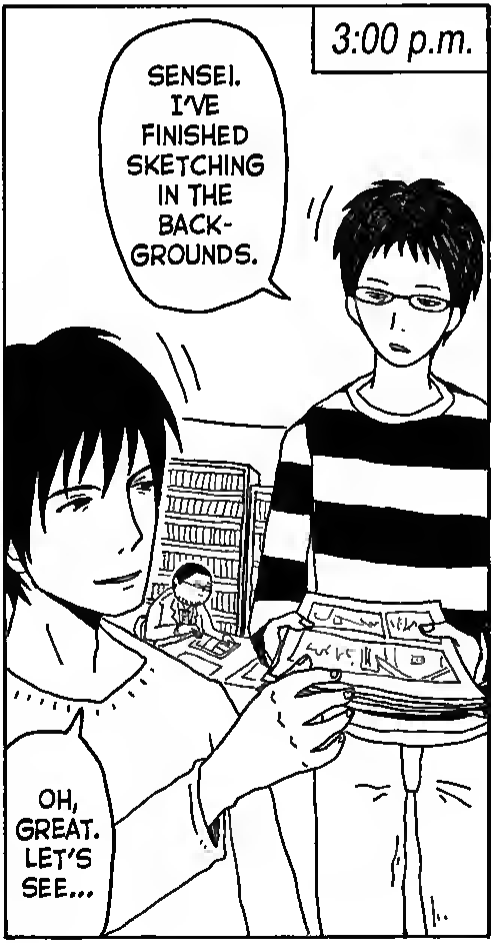
*In Japanese, *yaruki* means "drive," or "gung-ho spirit."

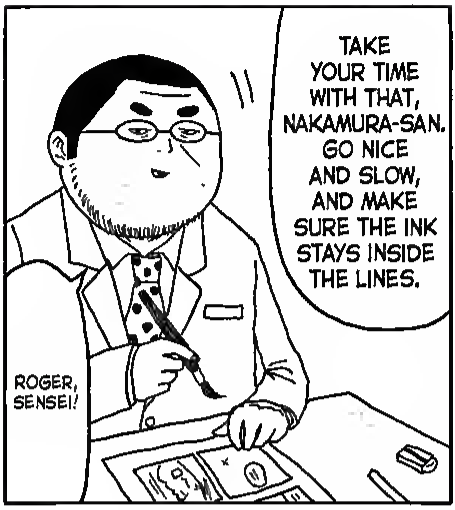
I FEEL SO BAD ASKING YOU THIS FAVOR, OGURO-SAN, WHEN I'M NOT EVEN YOUR EDITOR...
THERE CAN ONLY BE ONE ANSWER TO THAT...
THE THING IS, YOU SEE, TSUJI SENSEI HAS ANOTHER SERIES AT A DIFFERENT MAGAZINE, AND HIS DEADLINE FOR THAT FELL ON THE SAME DAY AS HIS YARUKI MAX DEADLINE.
SO HE HAS TWO DEADLINES AND NOT ENOUGH ASSISTANTS ...
AND THAT IS, I'D BE HAPPY TO!
HEY, WHAT ARE FRIENDS FOR?
IS IT REALLY OKAY?
EH, MR. MURAKAMI?
INDEED.
AS A MATTER OF FACT, I WAS JUST THINKING LATELY HOW I'D LOVE TO SEE A REAL MANGA ARTIST'S STUDIO IN ACTION. What a coincidence!
Oguro-san...
SHIZUO OGURO IS AT YOUR SERVICE! YOU MAY REST ASSURED, MS. MEGURO, THAT I SHALL FULFILL THE TASK WITH WHICH YOU HAVE ENTRUSTED ME, COME WHAT MAY!
THANK YOU SO MUCH!
...

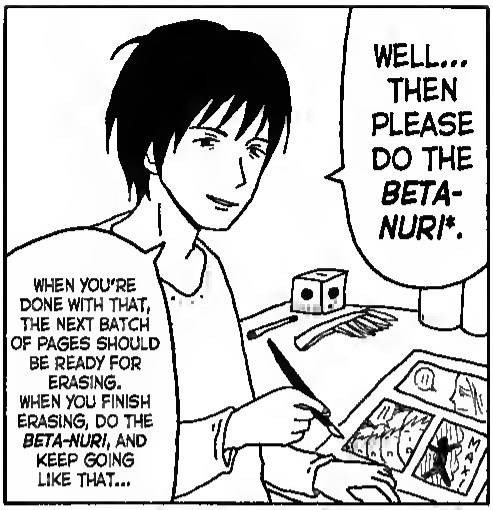
Meguro-san... See?
rub
rub
I'm working my butt off!

...
THESE LOOK FINE. GO AHEAD AND INK THEM IN.
hfff
OKAY.

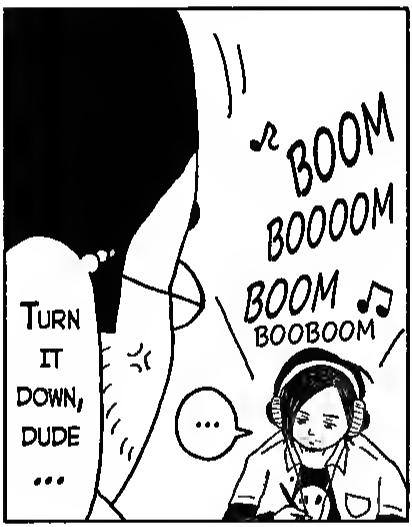

SENSEI! I'VE FINISHED ERASING THE PENCIL OUTLINES!
WHAT SHALL I DO NEXT?

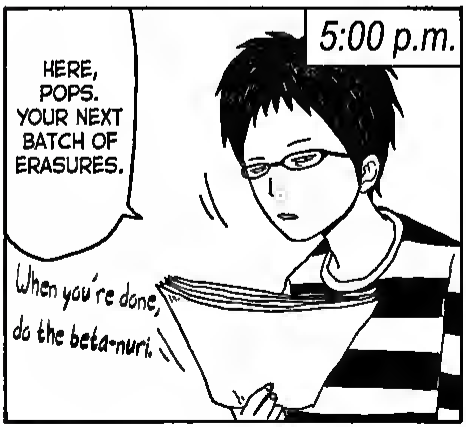

3:00 p.m.
SENSEI. I'VE FINISHED SKETCHING IN THE BACK-GROUNDS.
OH, GREAT. LET'S SEE...



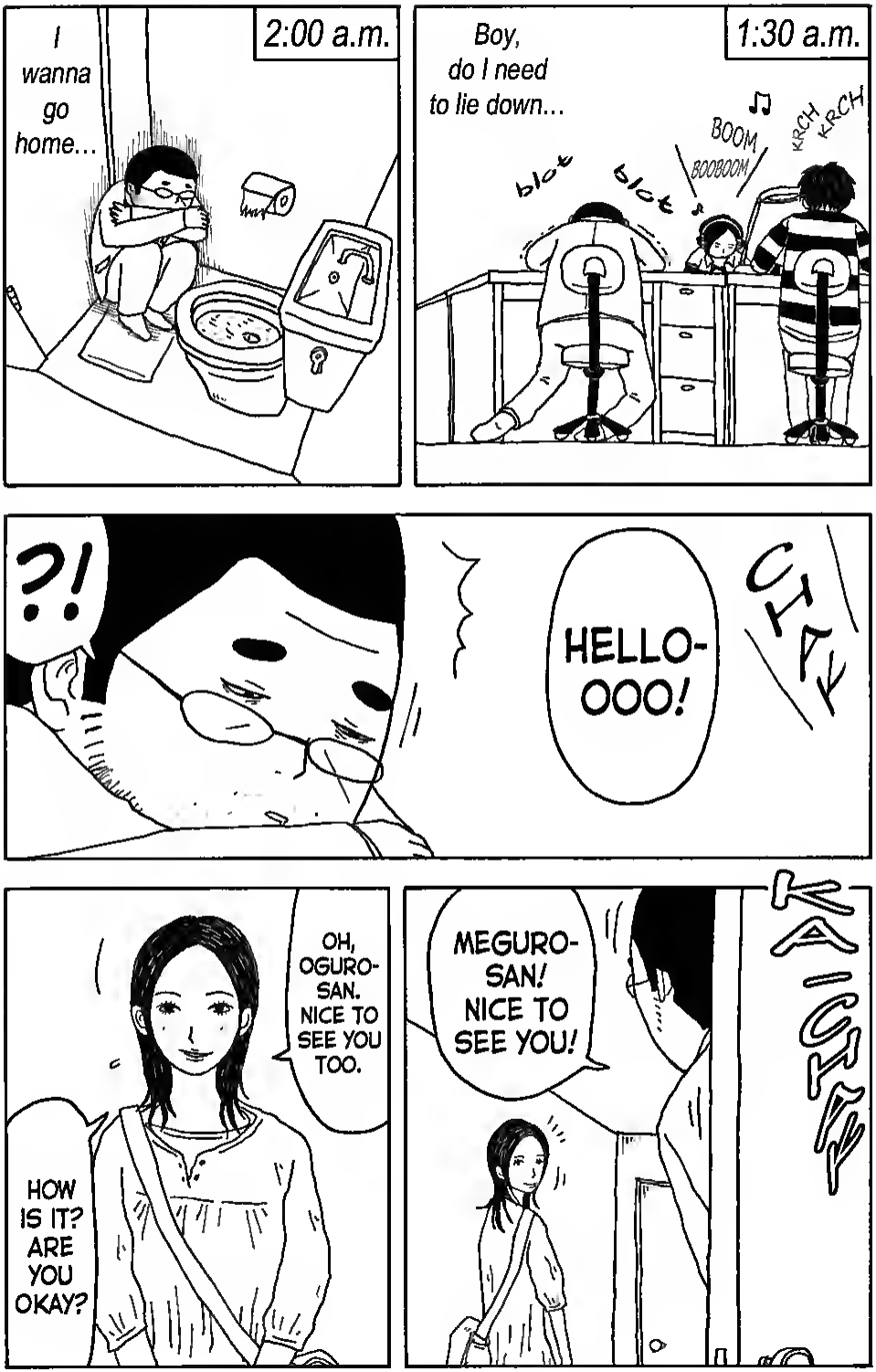

WELL... THEN PLEASE DO THE BETA-NURI*.
WHEN YOU'RE DONE WITH THAT, THE NEXT BATCH OF PAGES SHOULD BE READY FOR ERASING. WHEN YOU FINISH ERASING, DO THE BETA-NURI, AND KEEP GOING LIKE THAT...

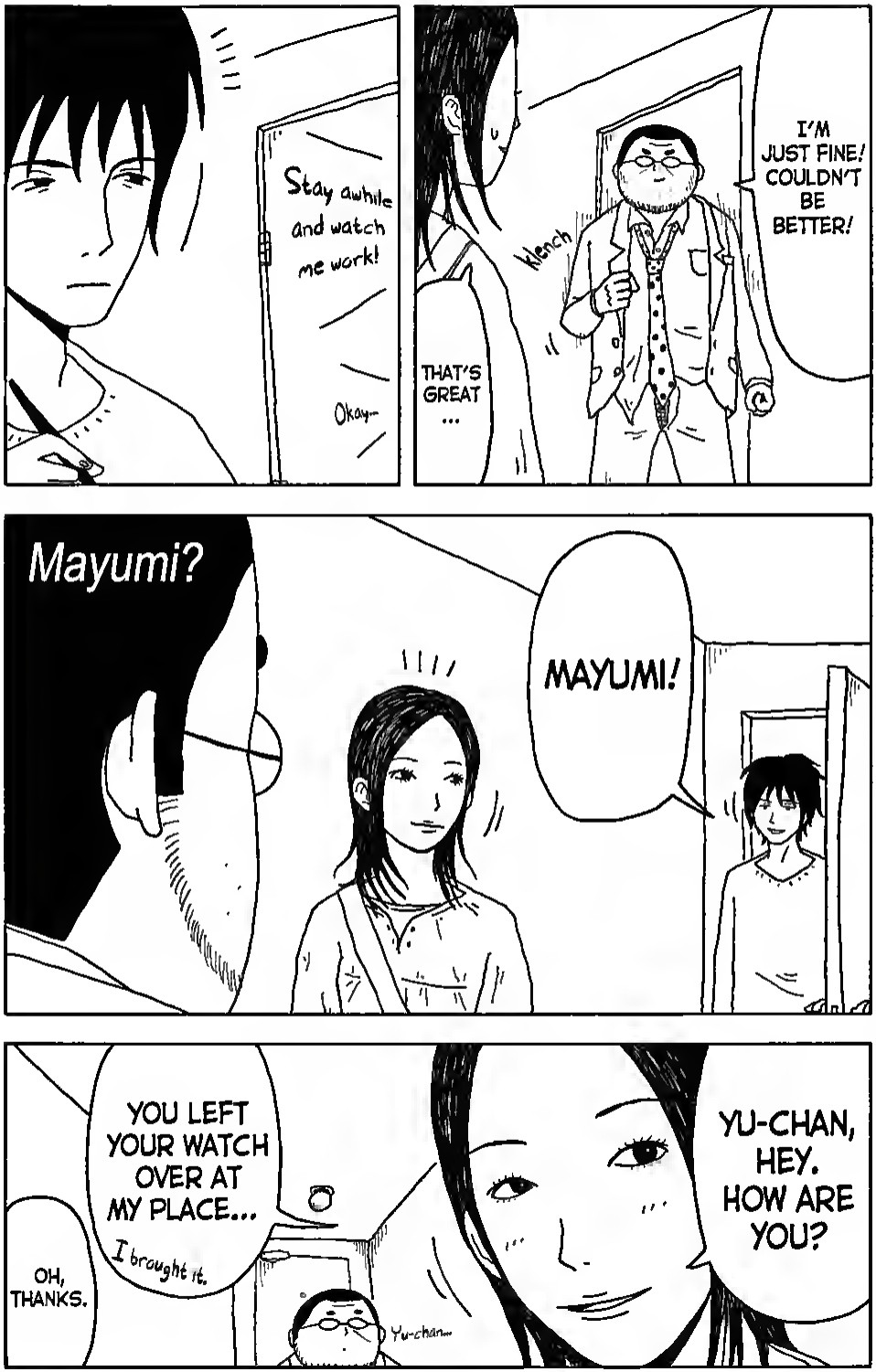
*Beta-nuri blacking out specified areas with ink





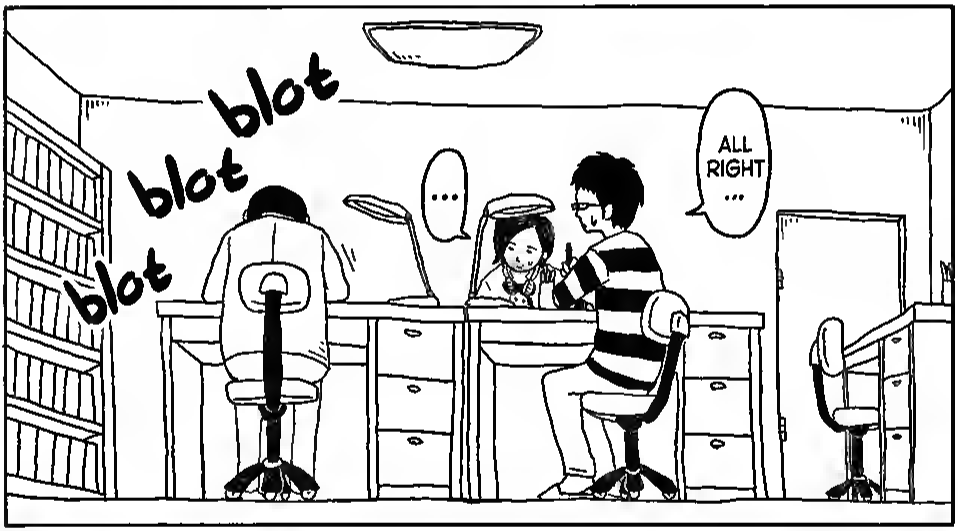
rub
rub
...to erasure!
Pops will devote himself ...
...
Sure, sure...
ROGER!
bwip
5:30 p.m.
blot
blot
And to beta-nuri!
Time for a little cigarette break.
9:00 p.m.
7:00 p.m.
AND TWO RICE-BALLS FOR SENSEI...
A LARGE BEEF BOWL FOR SAKAMOTO-KUN...
SO THAT'S A FRIED CHICKEN BENTO FOR YAMADA-KUN ...
And to running errands!
Thanks!
KRCH KRCH
Pops is getting a little sleepy...
1:00 a.m.
blot
blot
When is this going to be over?


I wanna go home...
2:00 a.m.
Boy, do I need to lie down...
1:30 a.m.
BOOM BOOBOOM
KRCH KRCH
?!
HELLO-OOO!
CHAT
OH, OGURO-SAN. NICE TO SEE YOU TOO.
HOW IS IT? ARE YOU OKAY?
MEGURO-SAN! NICE TO SEE YOU!
KAICHE


Stay awhile and watch me work!
Okay~
I'M JUST FINE! COULDN'T BE BETTER!
Klench
THAT'S GREAT ...
Mayumi?
MAYUMI!
YU-CHAN, HEY. HOW ARE YOU?
YOU LEFT YOUR WATCH OVER AT MY PLACE...
I brought it.
OH, THANKS.
Yu-chan...

So that's the story
...
I'm middle-aged, and I totally get it.
HOW'S THE SCRIPT COMING ALONG?
ON TARGET. IT'LL BE DONE BY DAWN.
...
GREAT. SO I'LL TAKE IT TO THE PRINTERS FIRST THING IN THE MORNING.
THANKS.

KLIK
KREE
I'm used to this ...
No big deal ...
BOOBOOM
BOOM
BOOM
?
BACK TO WORK...
tump
UH-HUH ...
I'm middle-aged, and I speak my mind.
IF I CAN HEAR IT, IT'S TOO LOUD...
COULD YOU TURN THE VOLUME DOWN?
YAMADA-KUN...
YEAH? WHAT?
TELL HIM, POPS. KEEP GOING!
It was about time.
ha ha ha
PFFT! SOME-BODY'S IN TROUBLE ...



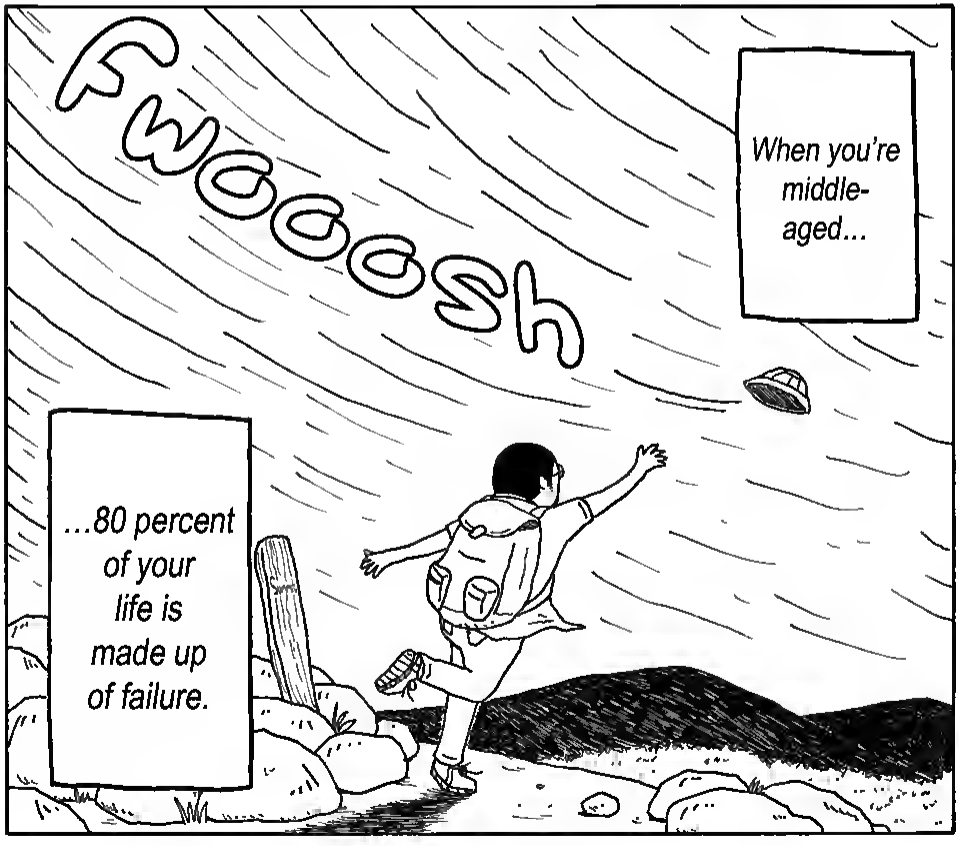
Meguro-san...

Mayumi-san...

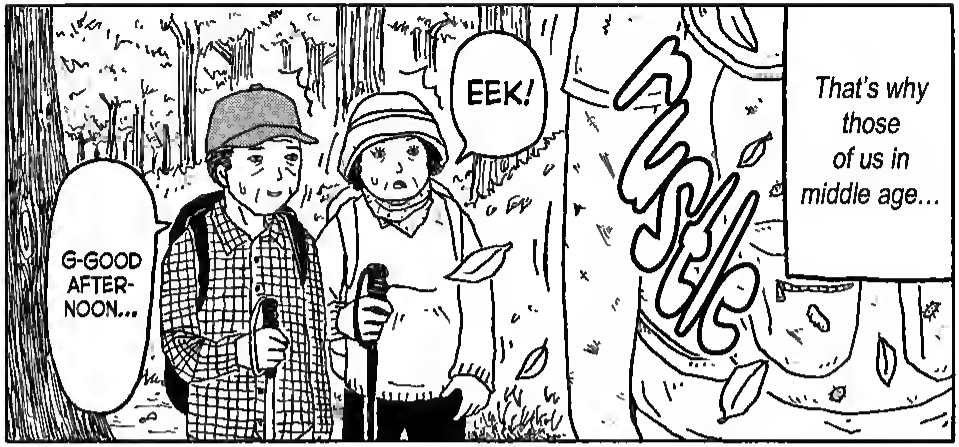
Goodbye...

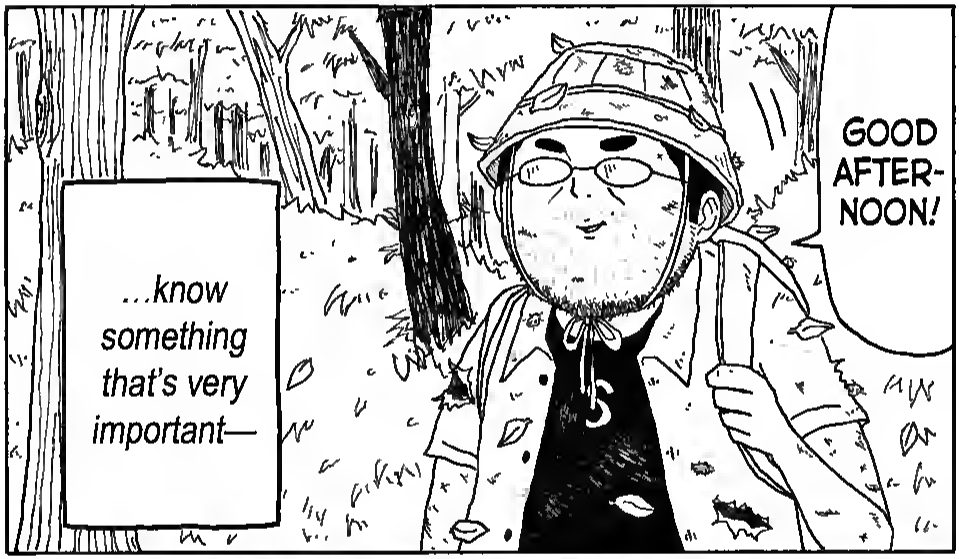
And...I'm speaking inside my heart as well...

MAY YOU BE HAPPY-YYY !!

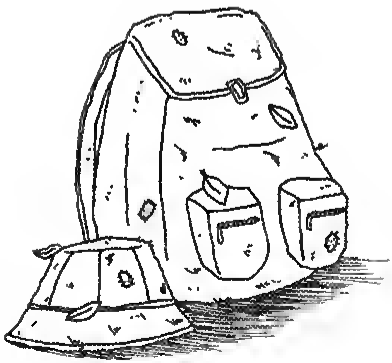

Fwooosh
When you're middle-aged...
...80 percent of your life is made up of failure.

FWOOOSH
AAGH...
MY HAT...
VWOOOOOOOO
And that's why...


That's why those of us in middle age...
EEK!
G-GOOD AFTER-NOON...


GOOD AFTER-NOON!
...know something that's very important—

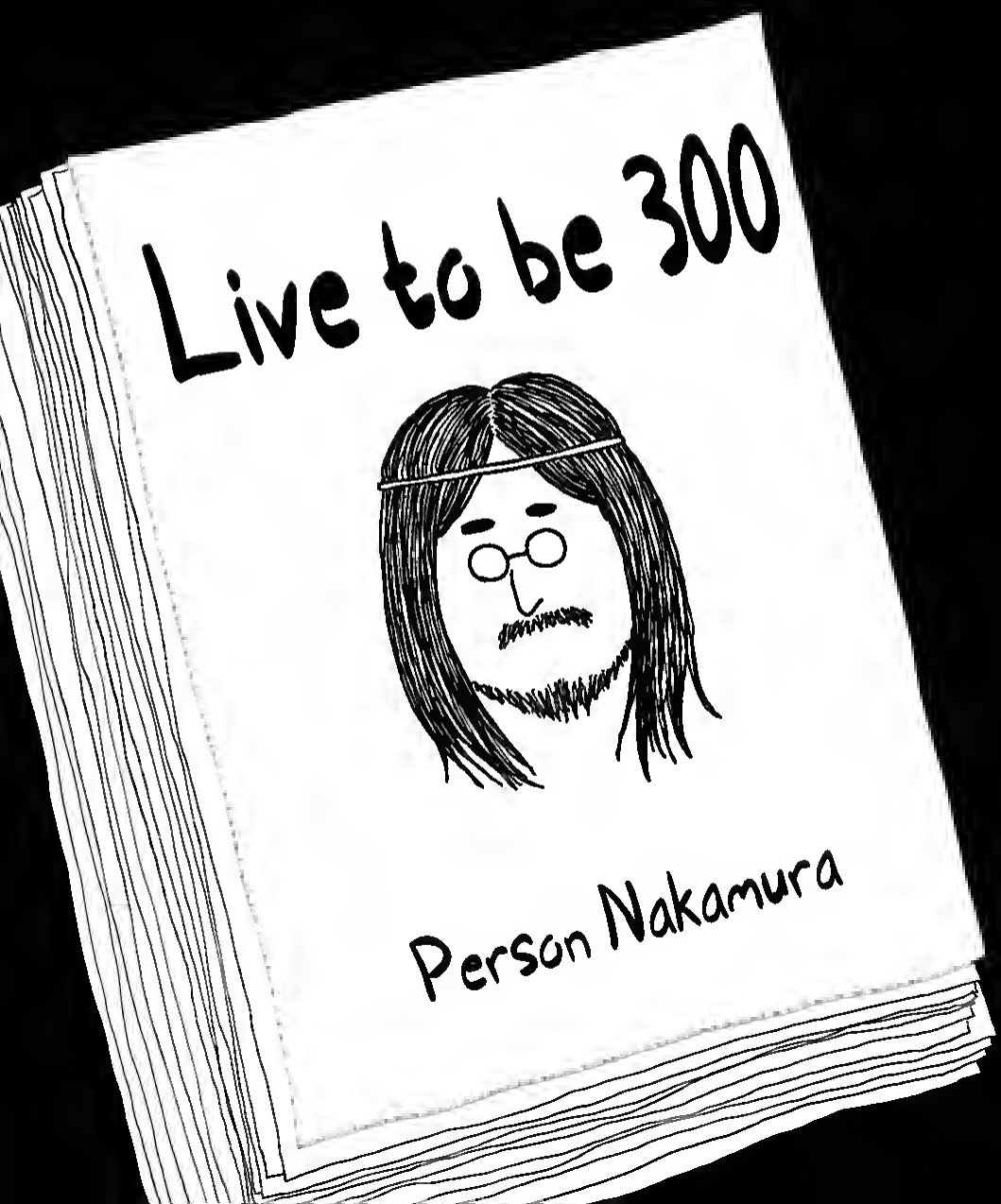
Zwak
Zwak
Zwak
How to climb back down.

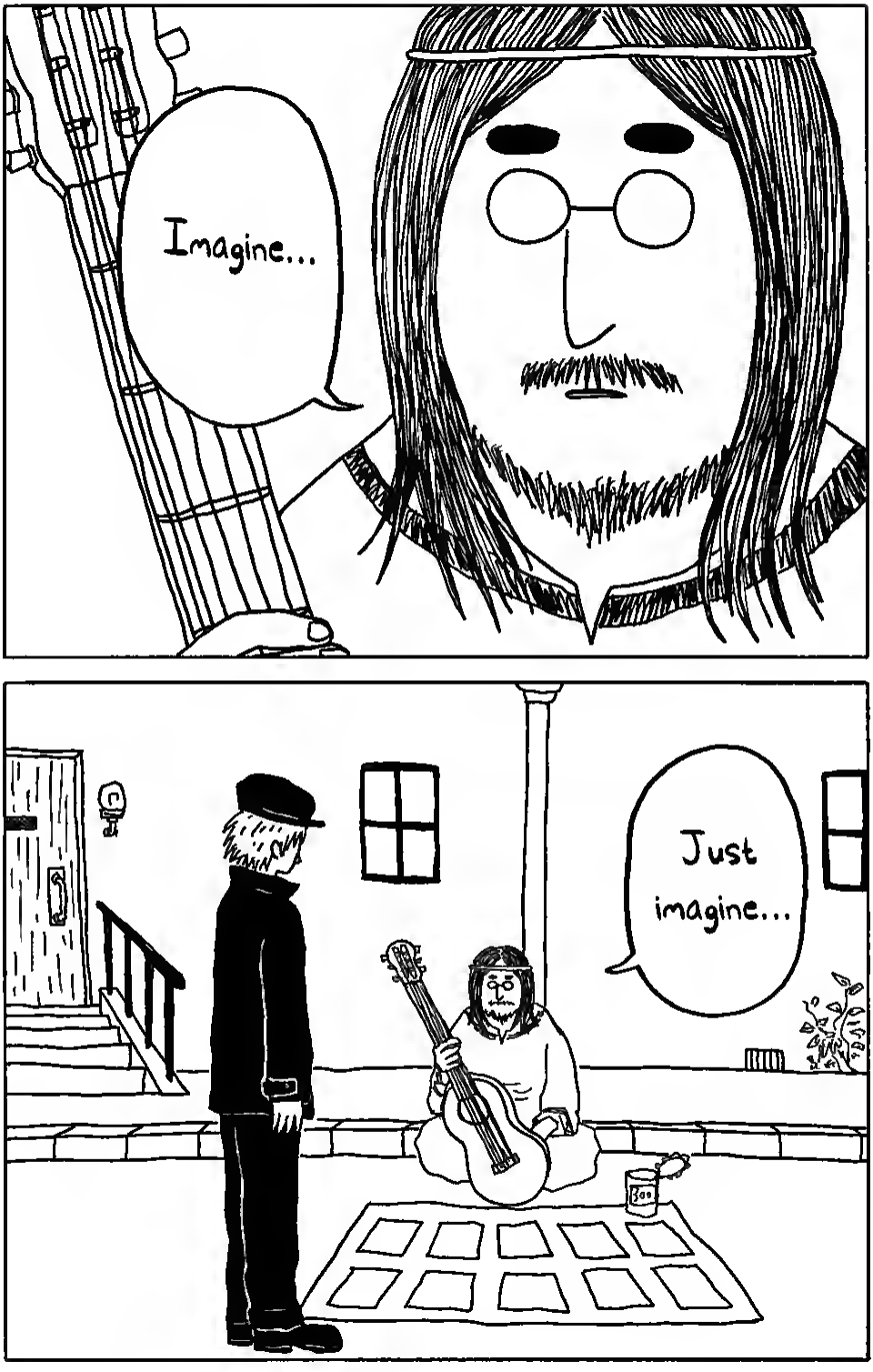


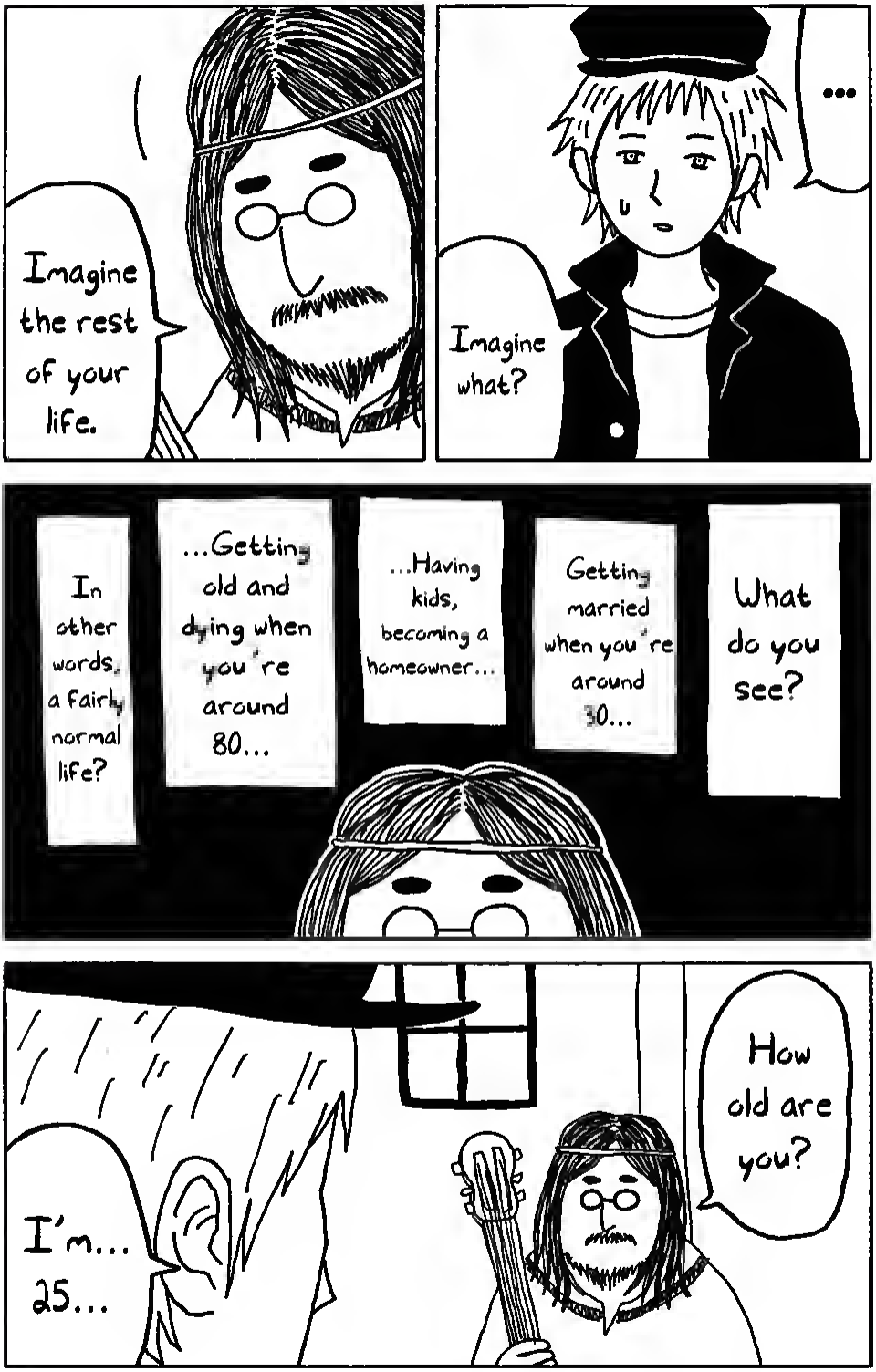
Sore muscles
KREEK
KREEK

Chapter 15:

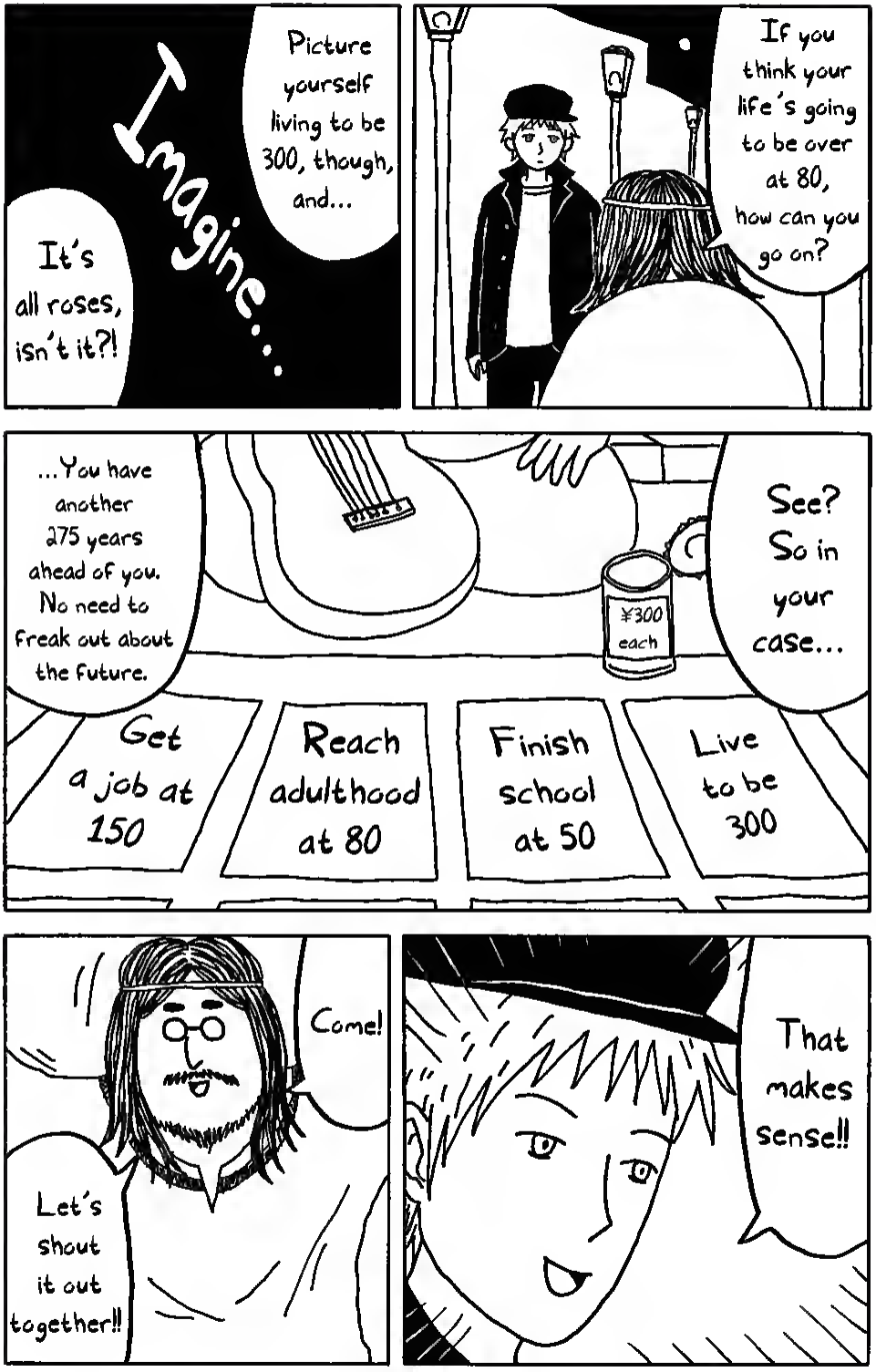
Imagine



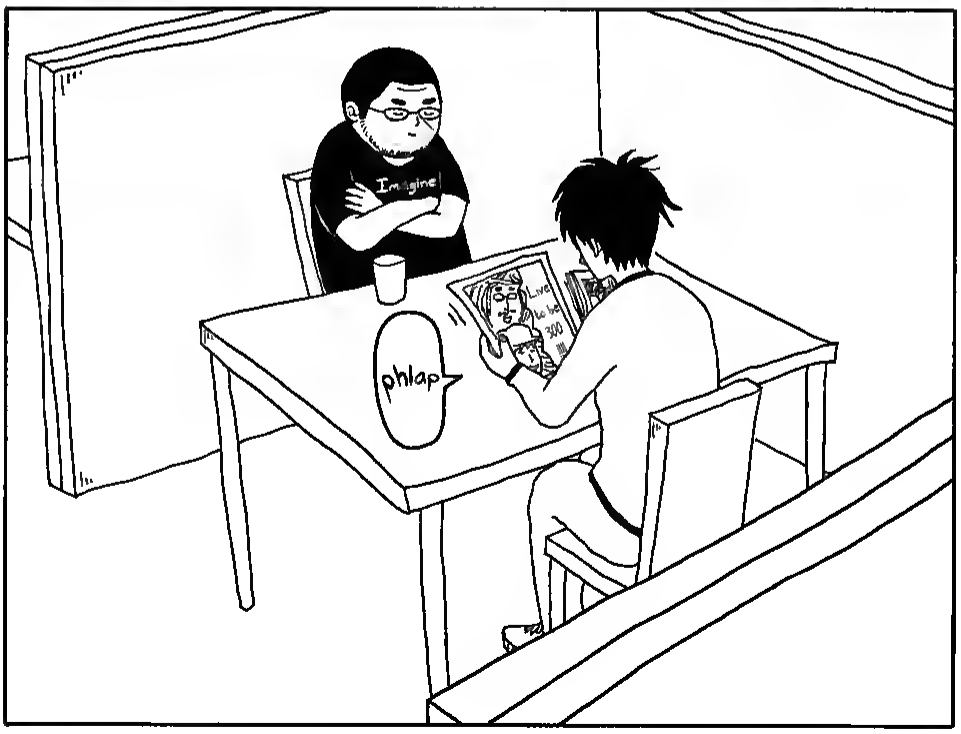

Imagine...
Just imagine...

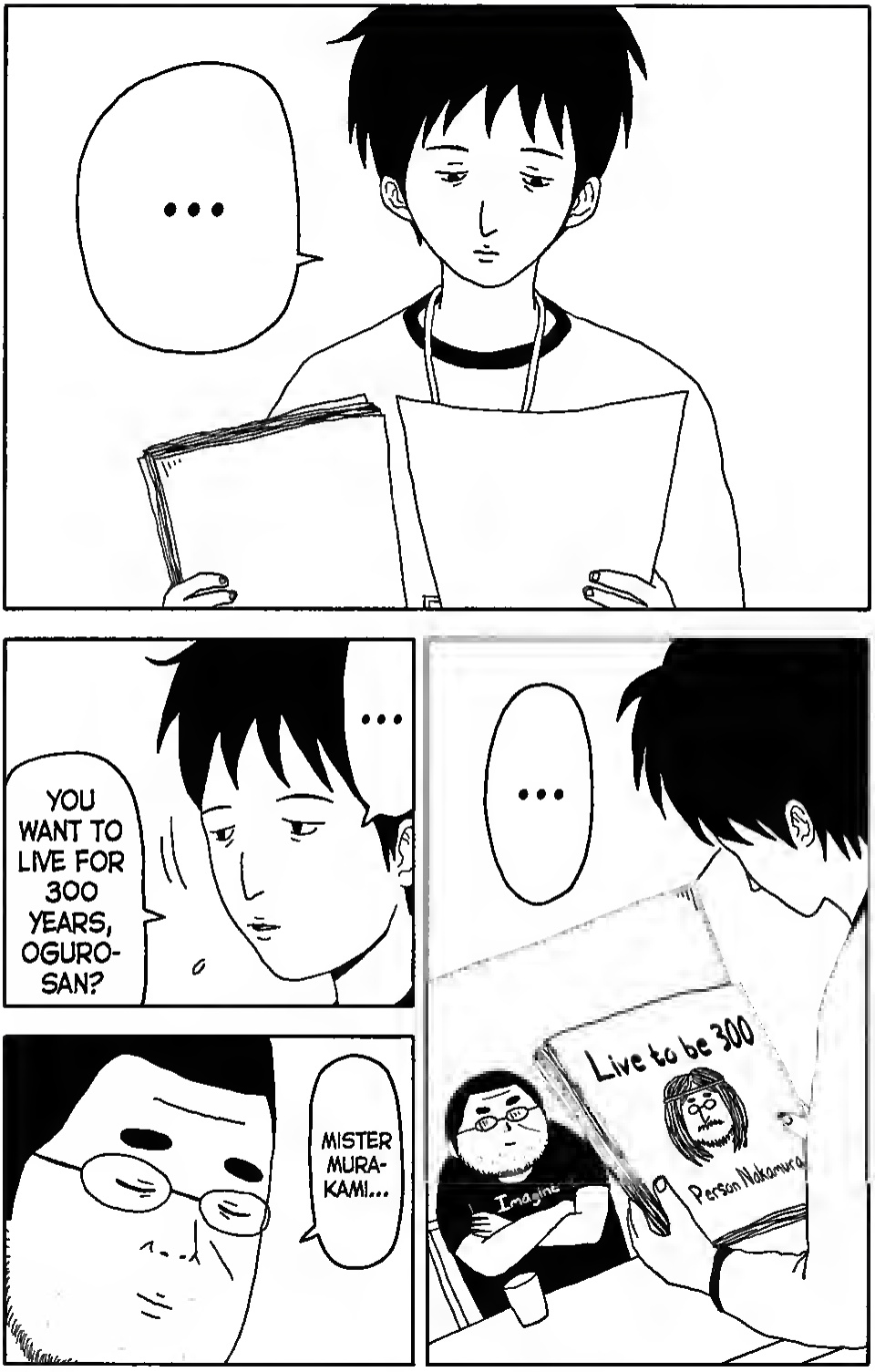

Imagine the rest of your life.
Imagine what?
...
In other words, a fairly normal life?
...Getting old and dying when you're around 80...
...Having kids, becoming a homeowner...
Getting married when you're around 30...
What do you see?
How old are you?
I'm... 25...

Live to be...
...
300 !!!!

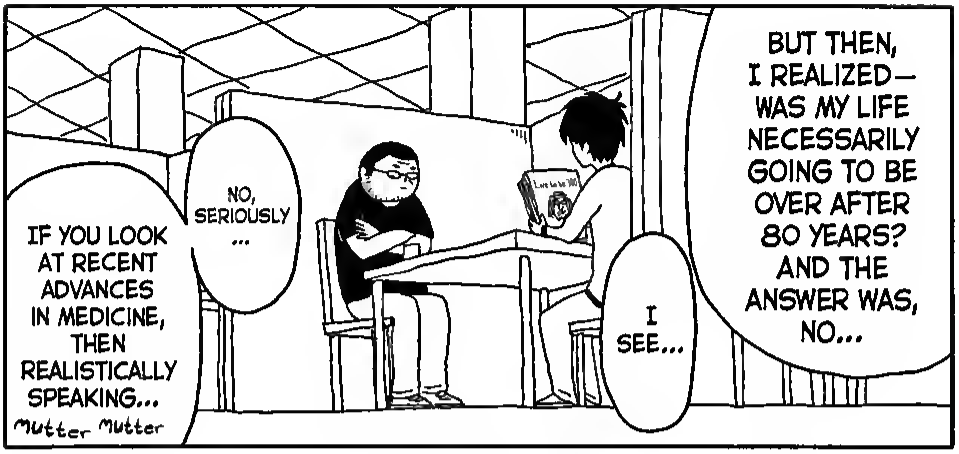

Imagine...
Picture yourself living to be 300, though, and...
It's all roses, isn't it?!
If you think your life's going to be over at 80, how can you go on?
...You have another 275 years ahead of you. No need to freak out about the future.
¥300 each
See? So in your case...
Get a job at 150
Reach adulthood at 80
Finish school at 50
Live to be 300
Come!
Let's shout it out together!!
That makes sense!!

...
300
...
Live
to
be...
Imagine

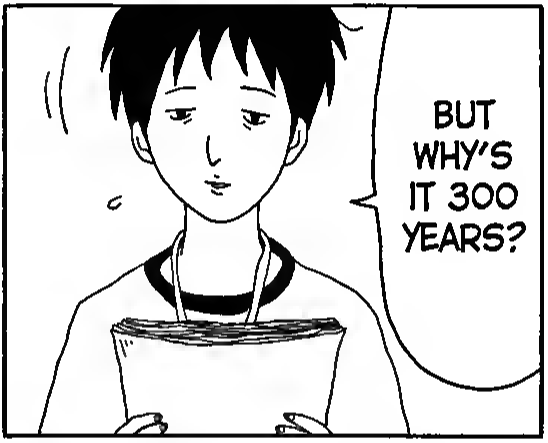

Imagine
phlap

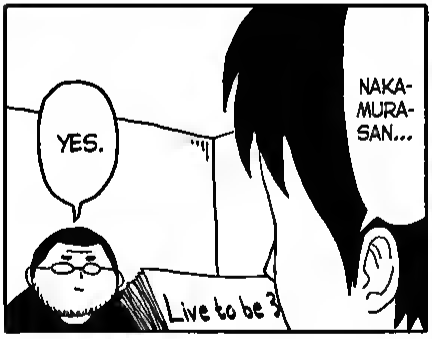

...
YOU WANT TO LIVE FOR 300 YEARS, OGURO-SAN?
...
Live to be 300
MISTER MURA-KAMI...

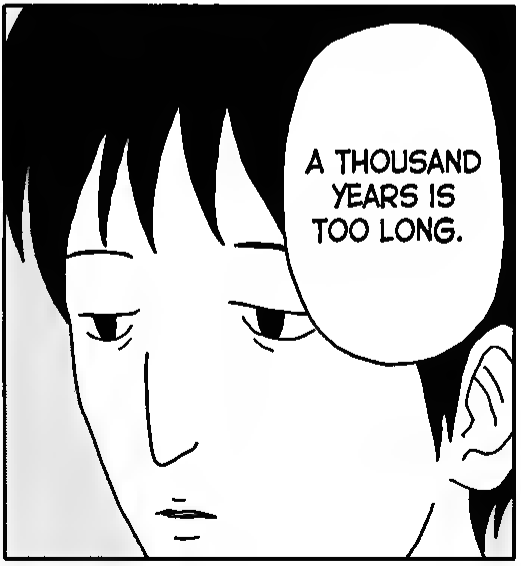
DO YOU KNOW HOW LONG YOU'RE ACTUALLY GOING TO LIVE?
NO ...
NOBODY DOES. NOBODY KNOWS IN ADVANCE ...
...HOW LONG THEY'RE ACTUALLY GOING TO LIVE.
NO, THEY DON'T ...
AND YET, IN SPITE OF THAT, I THINK A PART OF ME WAS STARTING TO PANIC...
...
...delicious fries with that?
Would you like some...
... STARTED WORKING AT A BURGER JOINT...
...AND DRAWING MANGA EVERY DAY...
KRCH KRCH KRCH KRCH
I'm going to become a manga artist!
I QUIT MY JOB AT THE AGE OF FORTY...
40
Manga!
Give it your all!
Go, Pops!
Get serious!
I WAS 42 YEARS OLD...
IF MY LIFE IS 80 YEARS LONG, THEN MORE THAN HALF OF IT WAS ALREADY OVER...
42
Halfway Mark
Get Published
Get Published
Get Published
Get Published
Published
...
... AND DRAWING MORE MANGA ...
...AND THE DAYS PASSED BY IN A BLUR, SO THAT BEFORE I KNEW IT...
Rejected
Rejected
Rejected
Rejected


BUT THEN, I REALIZED— WAS MY LIFE NECESSARILY GOING TO BE OVER AFTER 80 YEARS? AND THE ANSWER WAS, NO...
I SEE...
NO, SERIOUSLY ...
IF YOU LOOK AT RECENT ADVANCES IN MEDICINE, THEN REALISTICALLY SPEAKING...
mutter mutter

hff


BUT WHY'S IT 300 YEARS?


NAKA-MURA-SAN...
YES.
Live to be 3

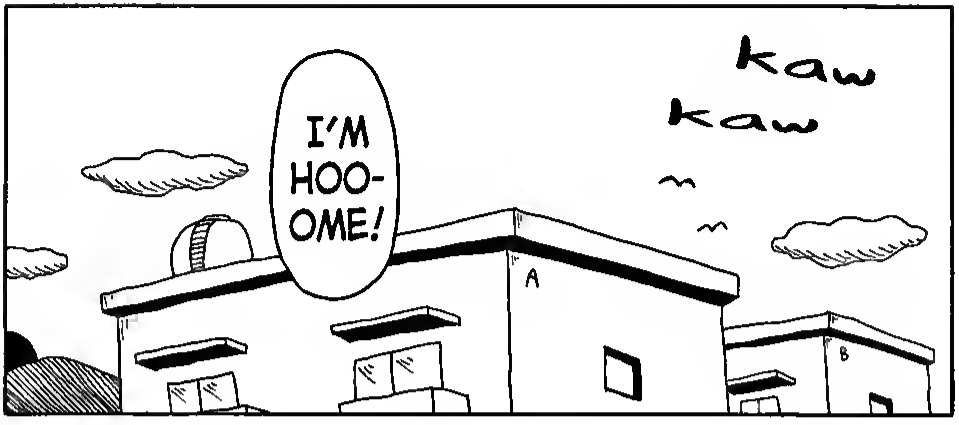

A THOUSAND YEARS IS TOO LONG.

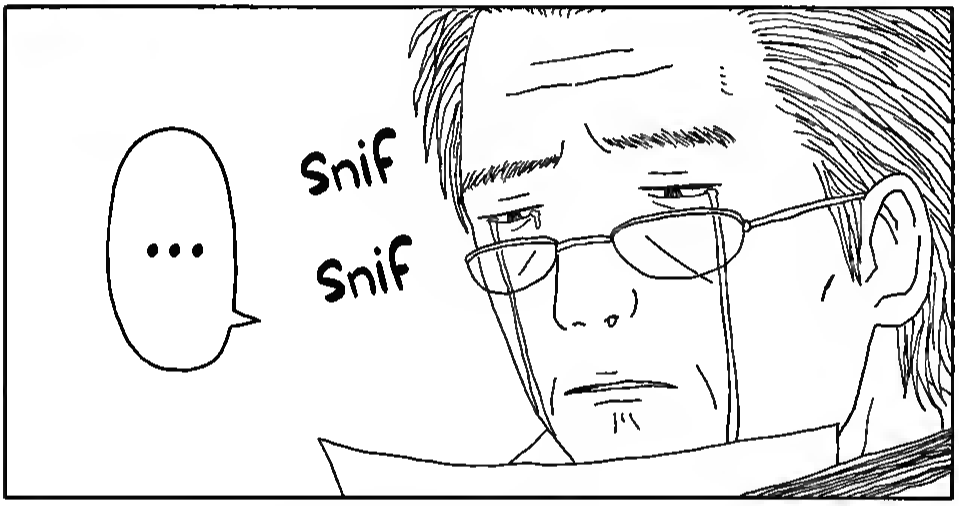
THIS MANGA IS...

“…a masterpiece.”

"Nakamura-san, this is a wonderful work."
HEY! PASS IT HERE !!
"Take this home, ink it in..."
Shwak
Imagine
Heyy!
zwoomph
whump
"It really touched my heart."
ALL RIIII-GHT !!
ka-boom
"Win the Ekkeman with it..."

...
Masterpiece Inside
bwuff
whee
wooh
phlap
Live to be 300
Person Nakamura


I'M HOO-OME!
kaw
kaw
A
B

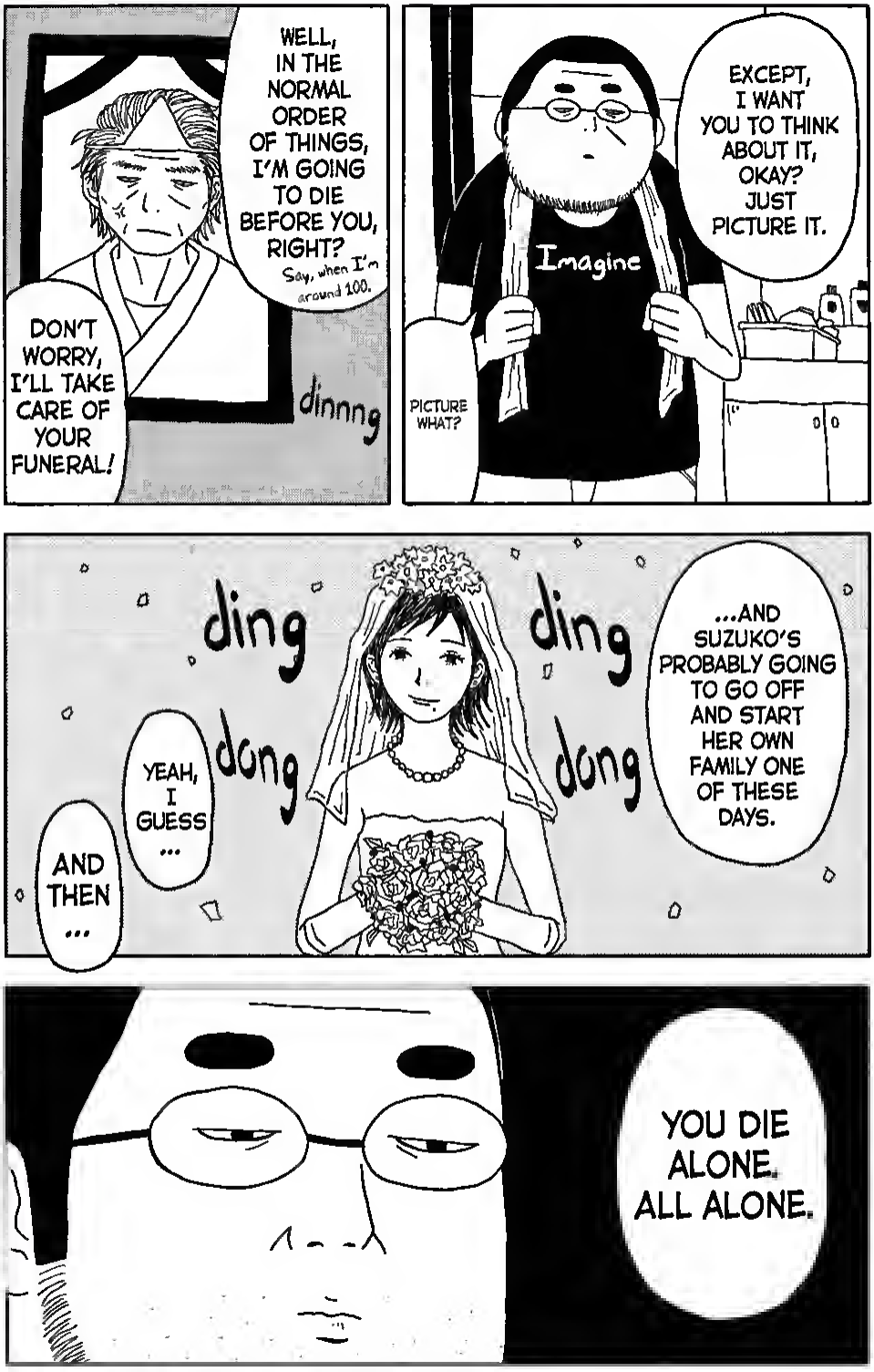

...
Snif
Snif

NO NEED TO CRY, DAD...
wipe
wipe

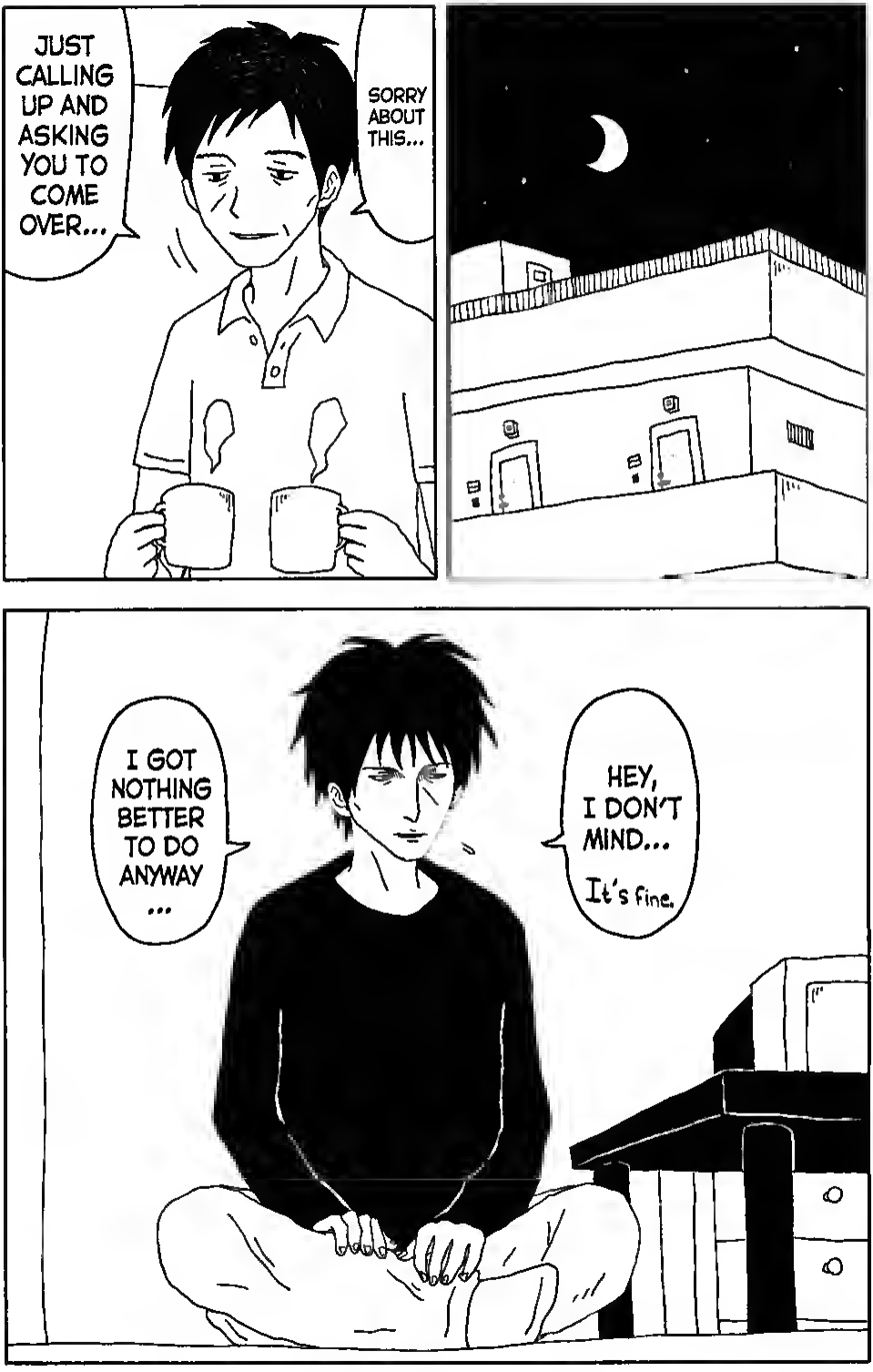
HEY, COME ON...

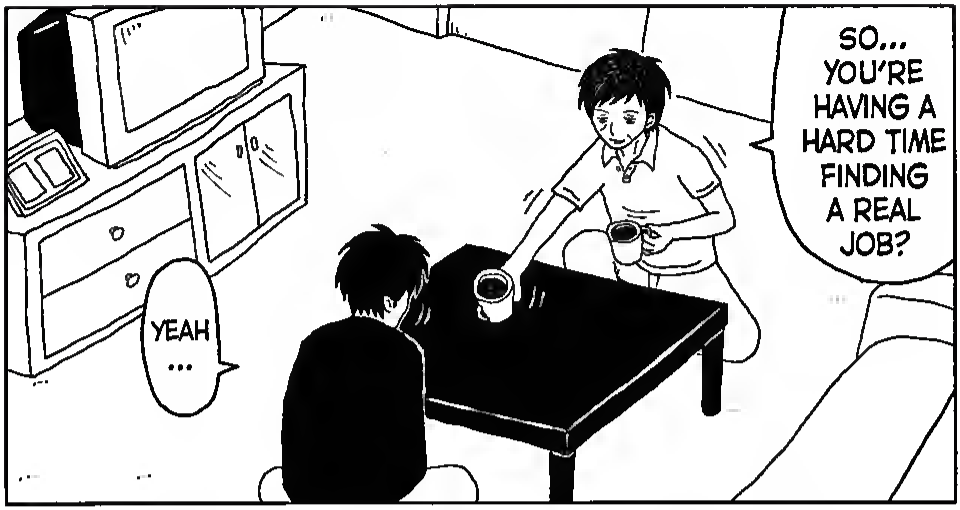
SHIZUO... I HAVE TO TELL YOU...

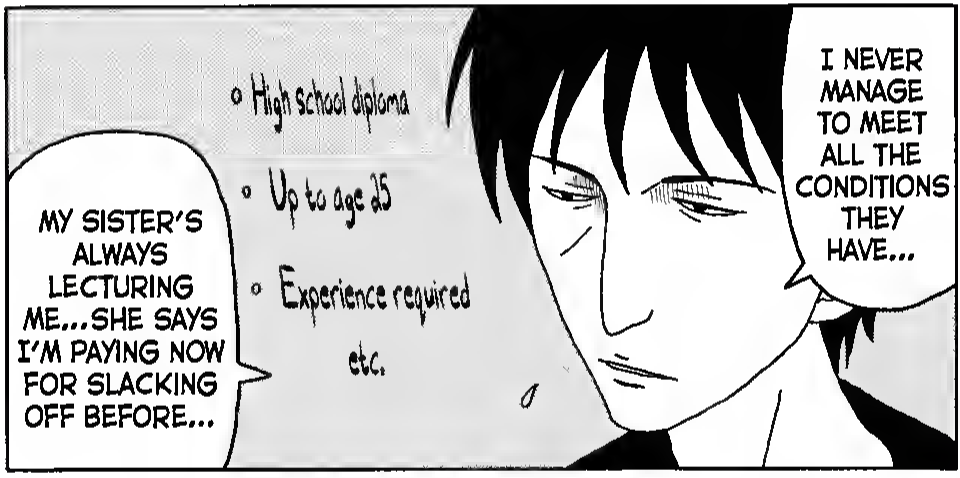
WHA-
AAT?
YOU'RE A REAL DISAPPOINT-MENT TO ME...
Live to be 300
WHAT'S IT ABOUT, REFUSING TO FACE REALITY?
IT'S ABOUT HOPE, ABOUT HAVING A DREAM.
...
WHAT IS THIS RIDICULOUS MANGA?
I wanna tear it up.
IT'S NOT RIDICU-LOUS ...
I DON'T HAVE ANY PROBLEM WITH YOU LIVING A LONG TIME, ALL RIGHT? LIVE AS LONG AS YOU WANT...
LISTEN TO ME, SHIZUO.

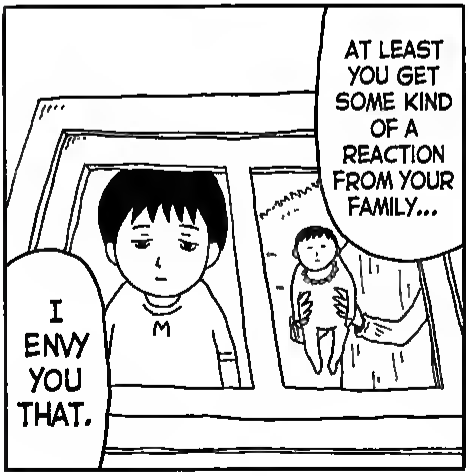

WELL, IN THE NORMAL ORDER OF THINGS, I'M GOING TO DIE BEFORE YOU, RIGHT?
Say, when I'm around 100.
DON'T WORRY, I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOUR FUNERAL!
dinnng
EXCEPT, I WANT YOU TO THINK ABOUT IT, OKAY? JUST PICTURE IT.
Imagine
PICTURE WHAT?
ding dong
ding dong
AND THEN ...
YEAH, I GUESS ...
...AND SUZUKO'S PROBABLY GOING TO GO OFF AND START HER OWN FAMILY ONE OF THESE DAYS.
YOU DIE ALONE. ALL ALONE.

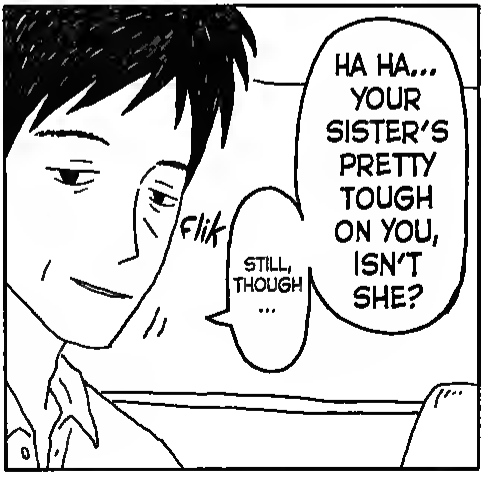
DAD... LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING, FOR ONCE...
WHAT?
THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS TO PEOPLE WHO GET TO BE FORTY-SOMETHING AND ARE STILL TALKING CRAP ABOUT LIVING FOREVER AND CHASING THEIR DREAMS, ALL RIGHT?
klap
IS THAT OKAY WITH YOU, SONNY?
Live to be 300
klap
WHEN WE DIE, WE ALL DIE ALONE...
WAA-ARGH !!
Don't throw it!
SHWACK
SHUT YOUR YAP, YOU PRETENTIOUS POSER!!

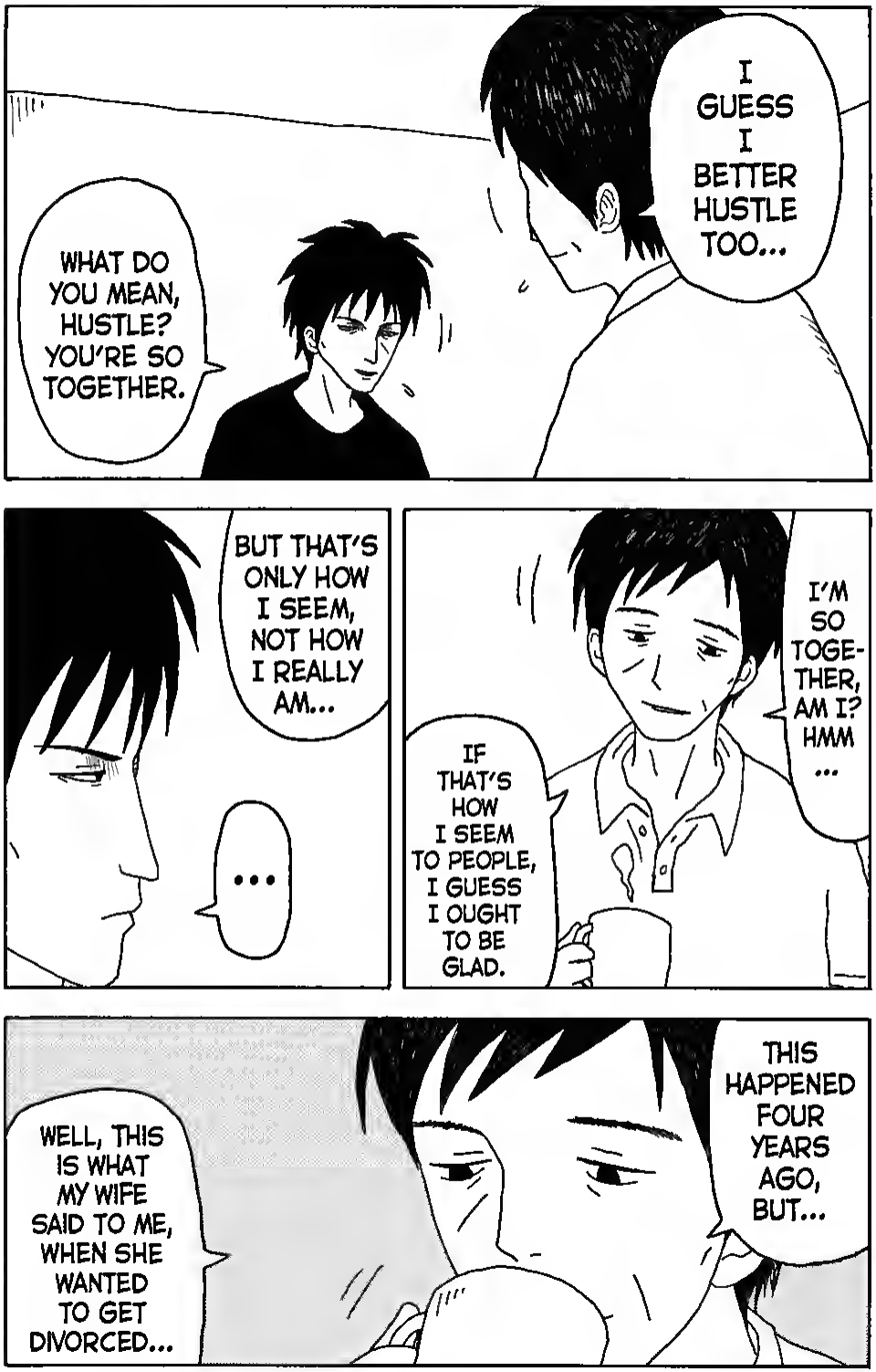

JUST CALLING UP AND ASKING YOU TO COME OVER...
SORRY ABOUT THIS...
I GOT NOTHING BETTER TO DO ANYWAY ...
HEY, I DON'T MIND... It's fine.

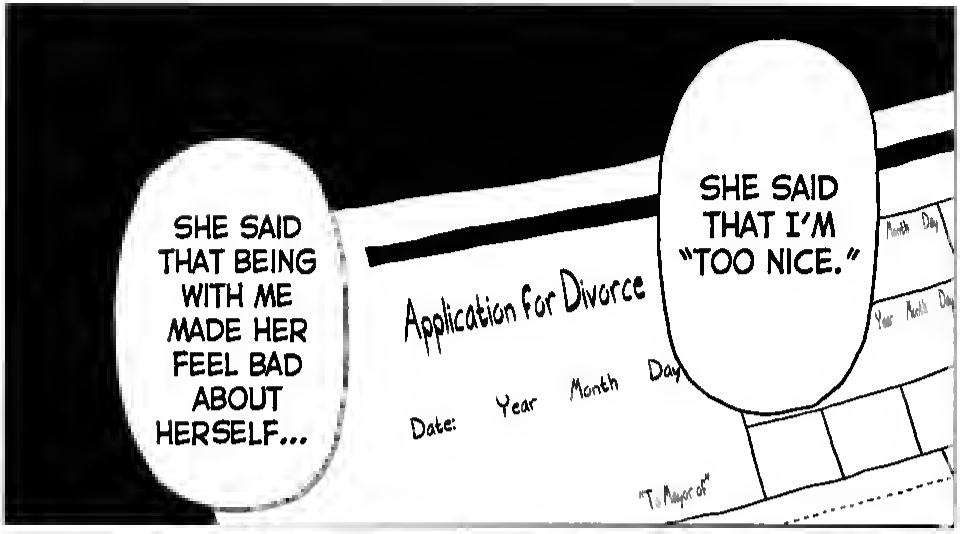

SO... YOU'RE HAVING A HARD TIME FINDING A REAL JOB?
YEAH ...

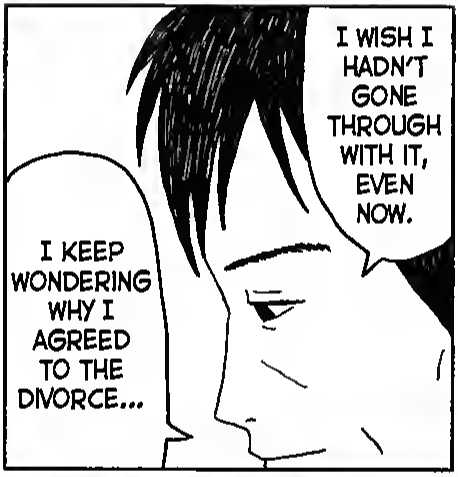

I NEVER MANAGE TO MEET ALL THE CONDITIONS THEY HAVE...
• High school diploma
• Up to age 25
• Experience required
etc.
MY SISTER'S ALWAYS LECTURING ME...SHE SAYS I'M PAYING NOW FOR SLACKING OFF BEFORE...


AT LEAST YOU GET SOME KIND OF A REACTION FROM YOUR FAMILY...
I ENVY YOU THAT.


HA HA... YOUR SISTER'S PRETTY TOUGH ON YOU, ISN'T SHE?
Flik
STILL, THOUGH ...

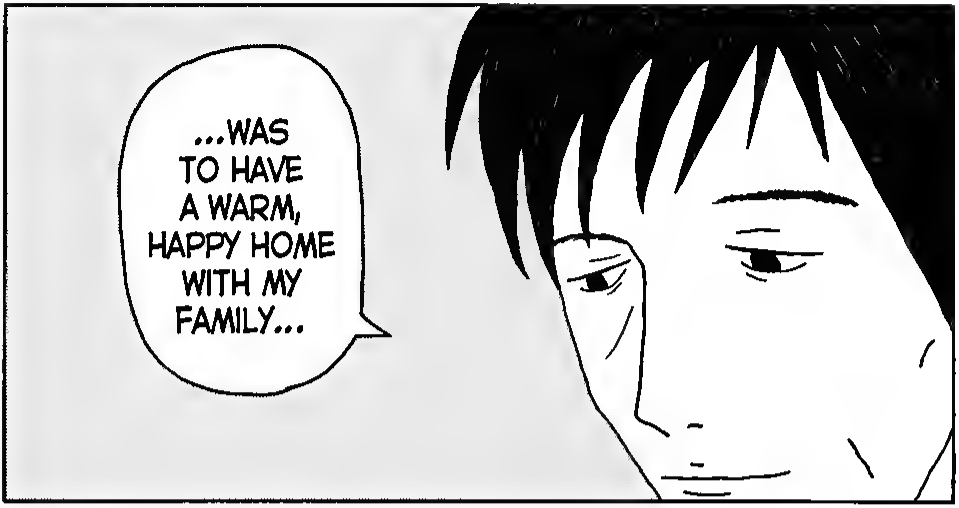

I GUESS I BETTER HUSTLE TOO...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, HUSTLE? YOU'RE SO TOGETHER.
I'M SO TOGE-THER, AM I? HMM ...
IF THAT'S HOW I SEEM TO PEOPLE, I GUESS I OUGHT TO BE GLAD.
BUT THAT'S ONLY HOW I SEEM, NOT HOW I REALLY AM...
...
THIS HAPPENED FOUR YEARS AGO, BUT...
WELL, THIS IS WHAT MY WIFE SAID TO ME, WHEN SHE WANTED TO GET DIVORCED...

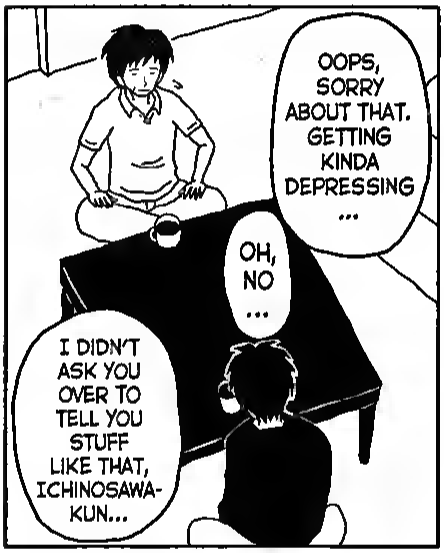

SHE SAID THAT BEING WITH ME MADE HER FEEL BAD ABOUT HERSELF...
Application for Divorce
Date: Year Month Day
SHE SAID THAT I'M "TOO NICE."

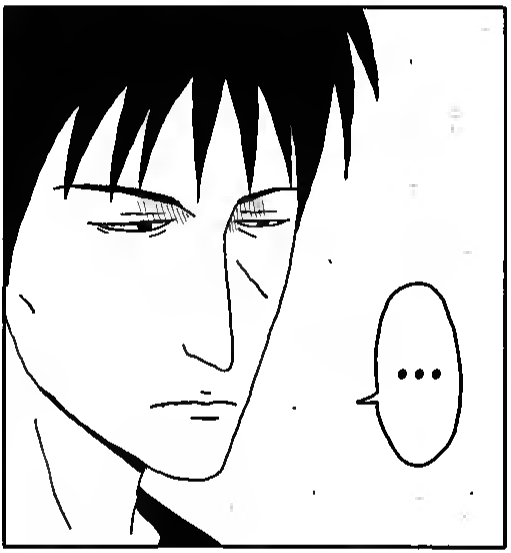

I WISH I HADN'T GONE THROUGH WITH IT, EVEN NOW.
I KEEP WONDERING WHY I AGREED TO THE DIVORCE...

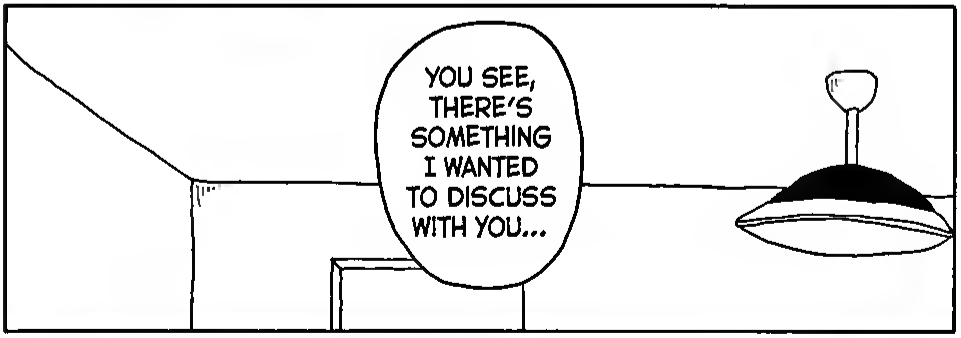
...

AND WHAT IT WAS ABOUT ME THAT DROVE HER AWAY ...
ALL I WANTED ...

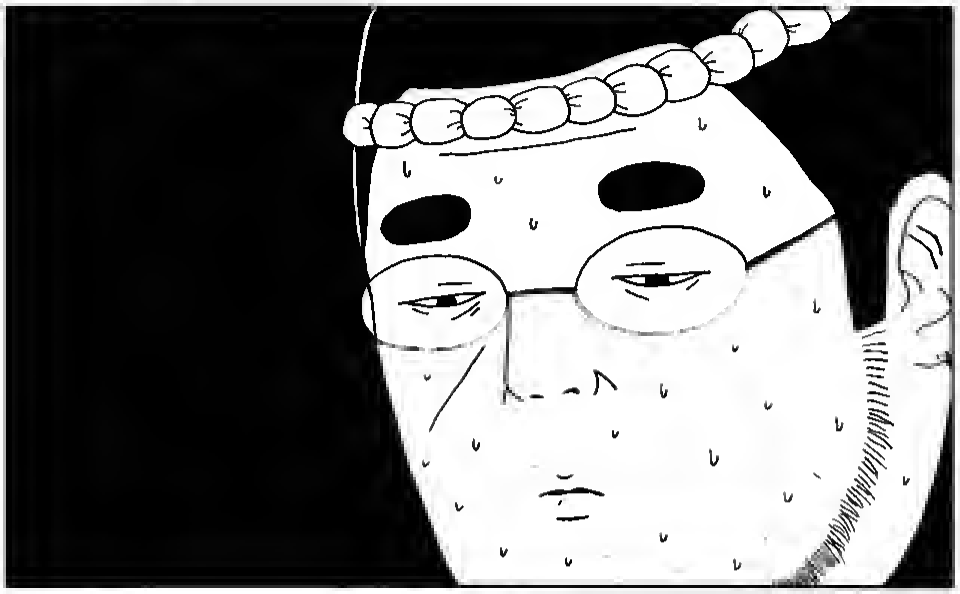

...WAS TO HAVE A WARM, HAPPY HOME WITH MY FAMILY...

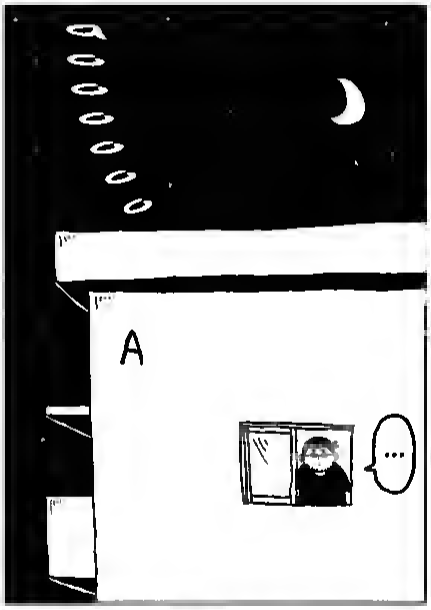

OOPS, SORRY ABOUT THAT. GETTING KINDA DEPRESSING ...
OH, NO ...
I DIDN'T ASK YOU OVER TO TELL YOU STUFF LIKE THAT, ICHINOSAWA-KUN...

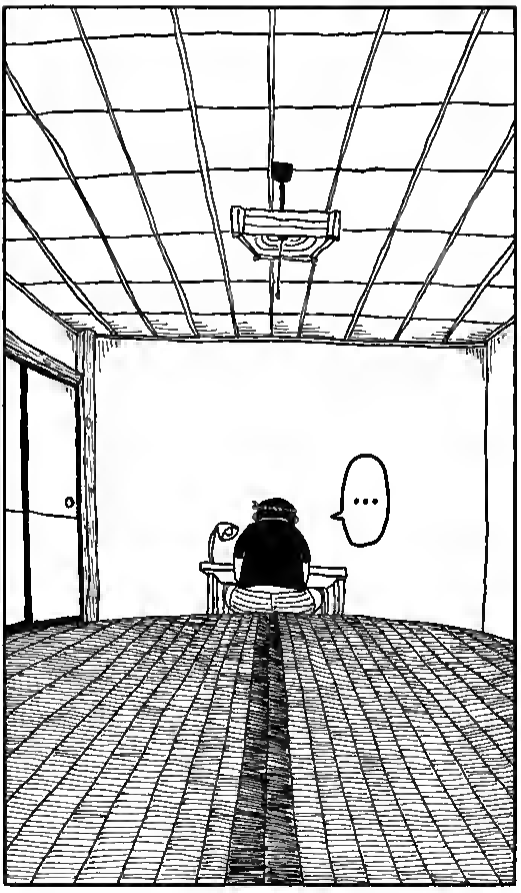

...


YOU SEE, THERE'S SOMETHING I WANTED TO DISCUSS WITH YOU...

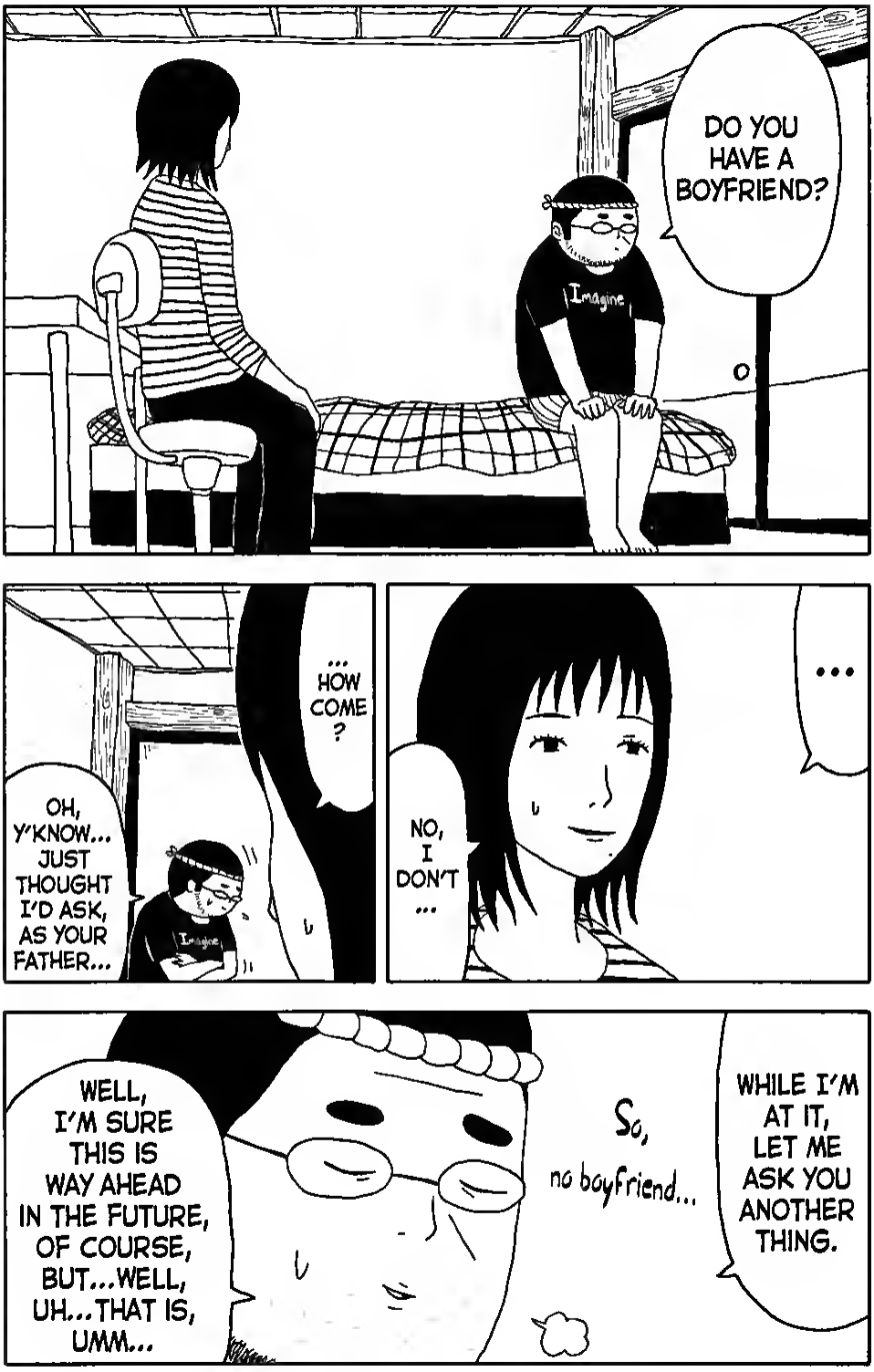
You die alone. All alone.

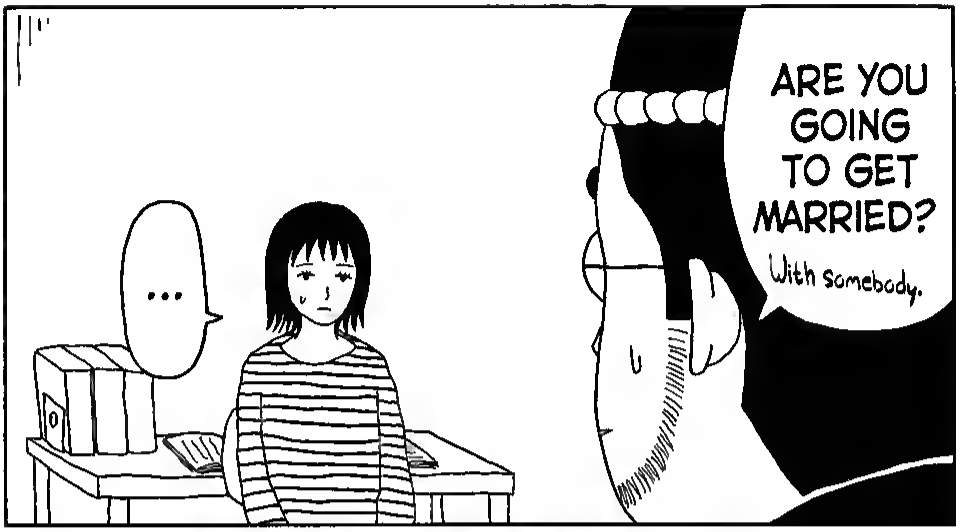



A
...


...

SUZUKO
...
HM?

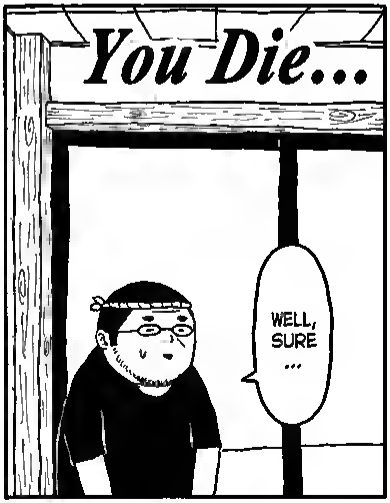

DO YOU HAVE A BOYFRIEND?
Imagine
...
NO, I DON'T ...
... HOW COME?
OH, Y'KNOW... JUST THOUGHT I'D ASK, AS YOUR FATHER...
So, no boyfriend...
WHILE I'M AT IT, LET ME ASK YOU ANOTHER THING.
WELL, I'M SURE THIS IS WAY AHEAD IN THE FUTURE, OF COURSE, BUT...WELL, UH...THAT IS, UMM...

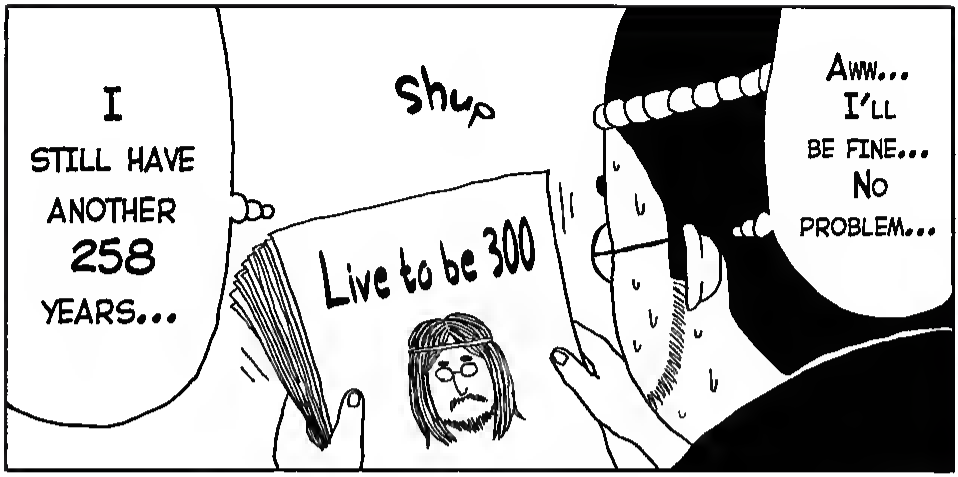

ARE YOU GOING TO GET MARRIED?
With somebody.
...

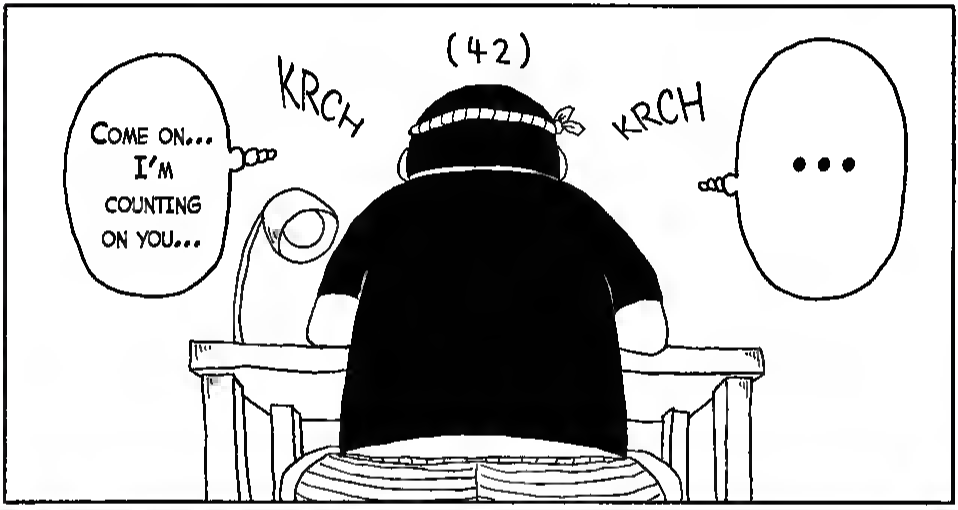
WELL ...
Get married...
YEAH, EVENTUALLY I'D LIKE TO, SOMEDAY...

All alone.

...Alone
UH... GOOD NIGHT.
GOOD NIGHT ...


You Die...
WELL, SURE ...

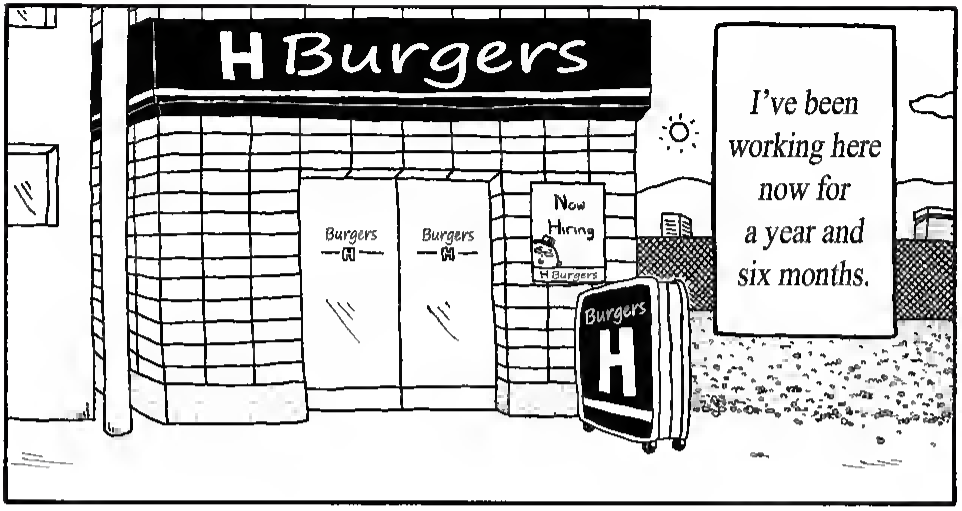


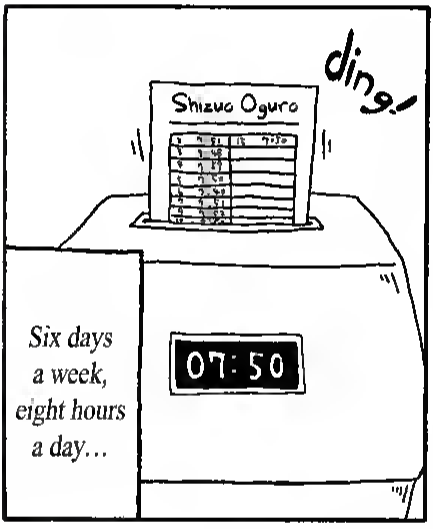


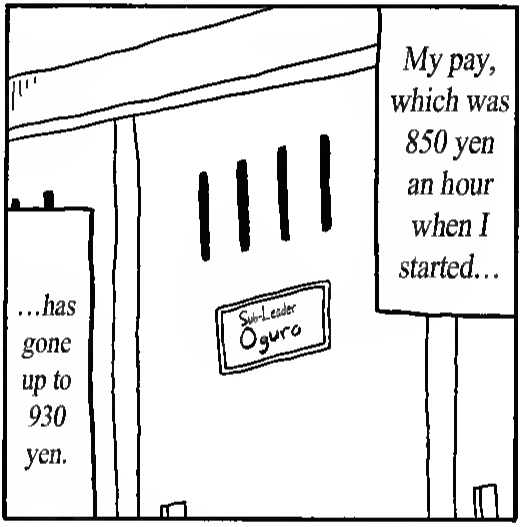
Medical research!!

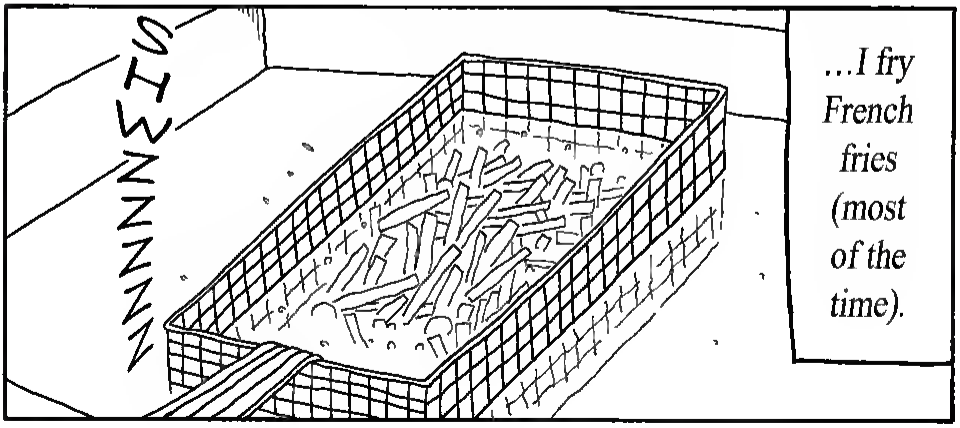
Chapter 16:

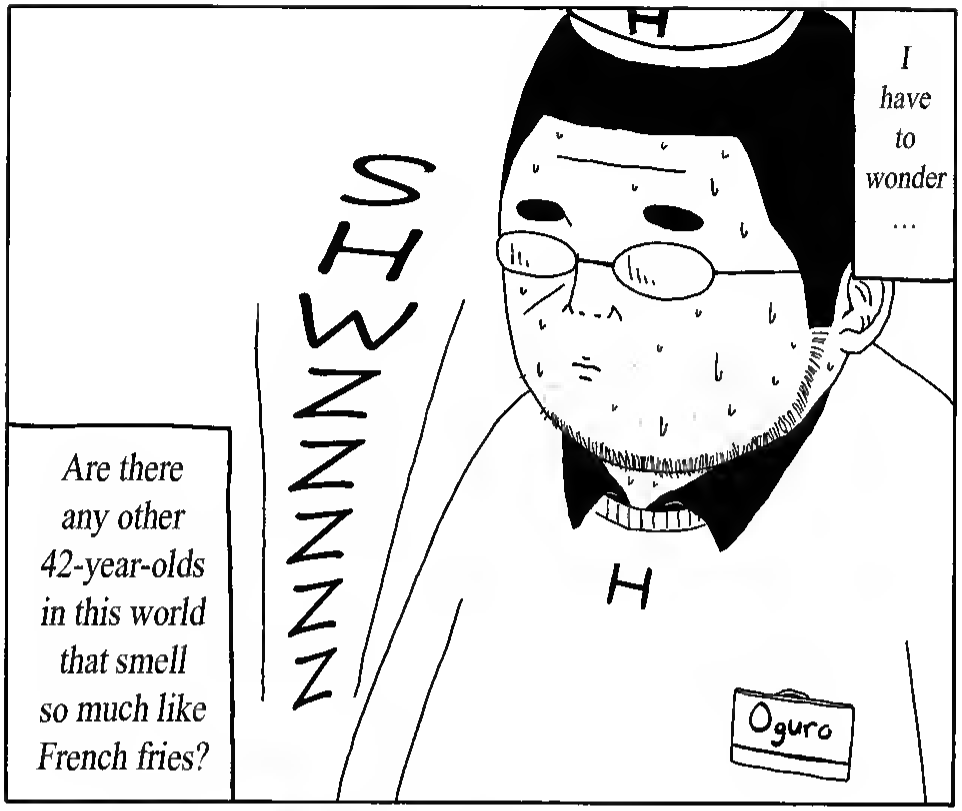
The Guys' Melody

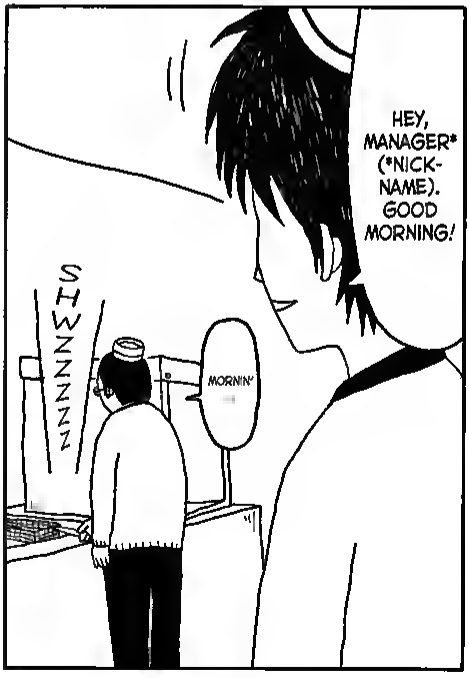

H Burgers
Burgers
Burgers
Now Hiring
H Burgers
Burgers
I've been working here now for a year and six months.


ding!
Shizuo Oguro
07:50
Six days a week, eight hours a day…


Sub-Leader Oguro
…has gone up to 930 yen.
My pay, which was 850 yen an hour when I started…

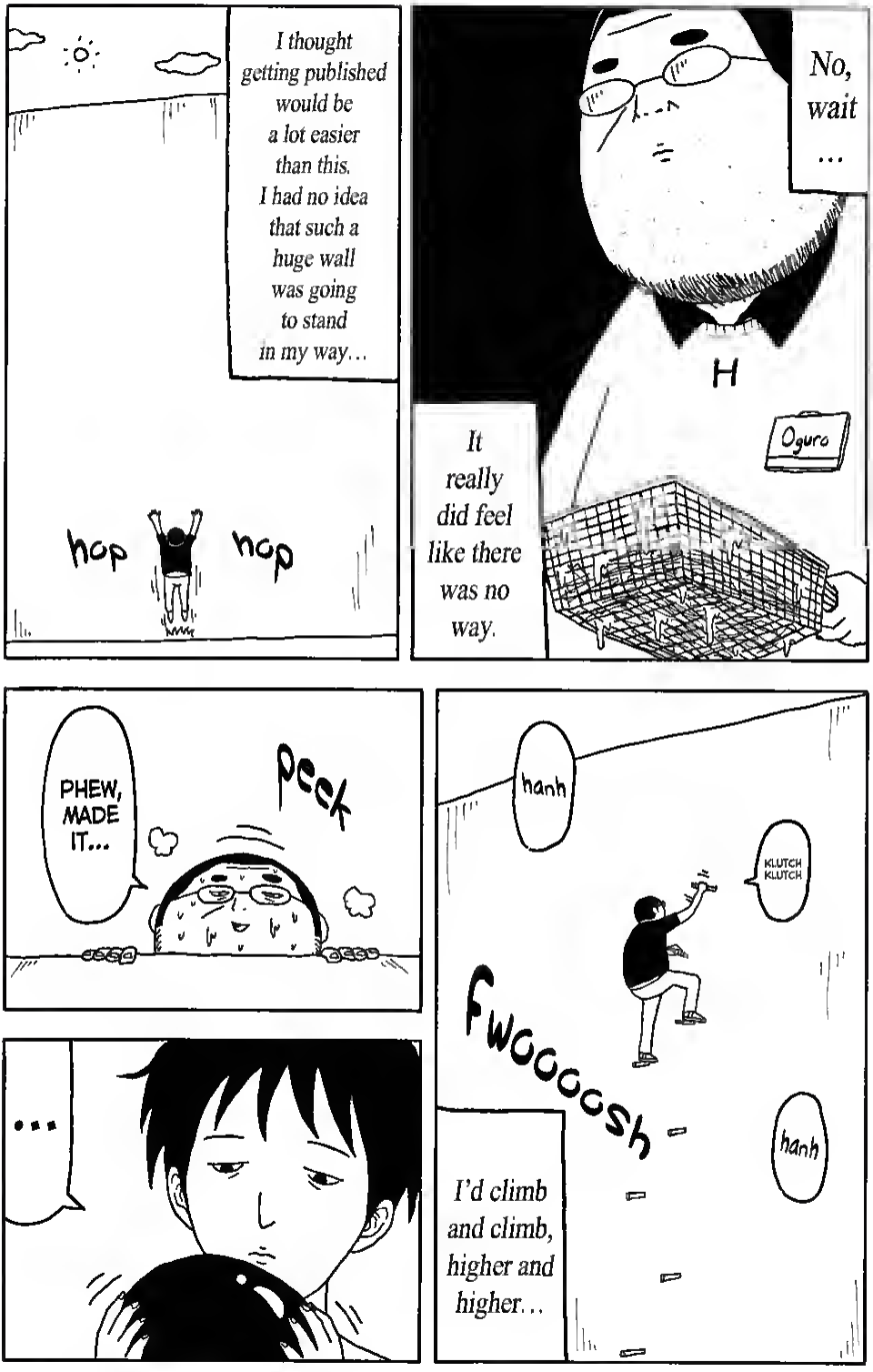

SIZZZZZZ
…I fry French fries (most of the time).


I have to wonder ...
SHWNNNNN
H
H
Oguro
Are there any other 42-year-olds in this world that smell so much like French fries?

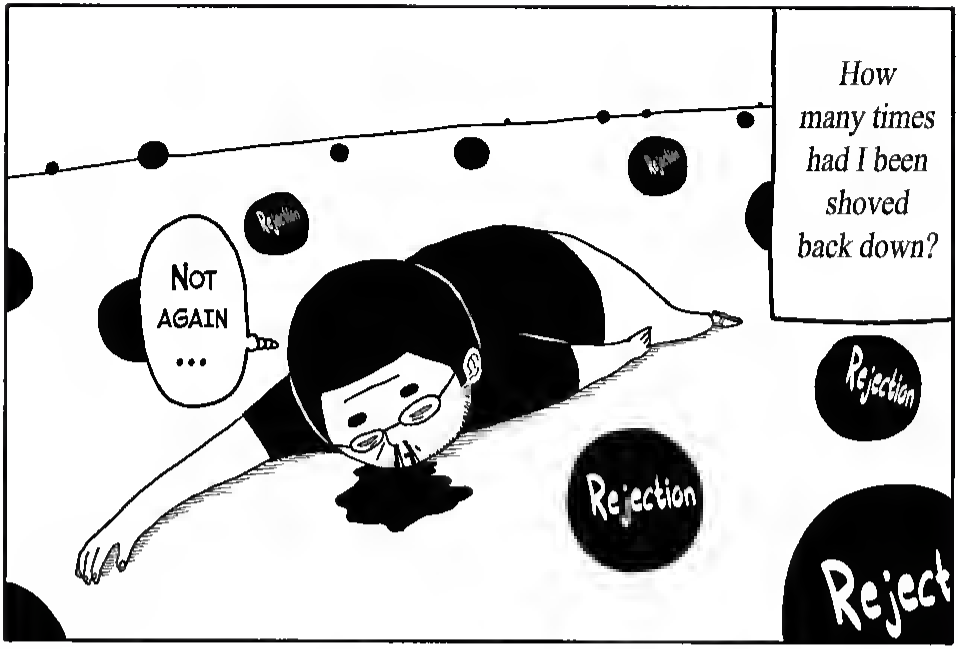

HEY, MANAGER* (*NICK-NAME). GOOD MORNING!
SHWNNNNN
MORNIN'

I honestly don't know.

Team leader Tanaka, age 25.
He's my boss.
YOU SEEM PRETTY OUT OF IT TODAY.
WHAT HAPPENED, ANOTHER ONE OF YOUR MANGA GOT REJECTED?
Tanaka
...
turn
DIDN'T GET ENOUGH SLEEP ...
WHOA... LOOK AT THOSE DARK CIRCLES UNDER YOUR EYES...
YOU HAVING PSYCHO-LOGICAL PROBLEMS OR SOMETHING?
...WAS UP ALL NIGHT WORKING. MANGA.
WHAT?
NO WAY... YOU'RE FINALLY GOING TO GET PUBLISHED?
WHADDAYA MEAN, "NO WAY" ?

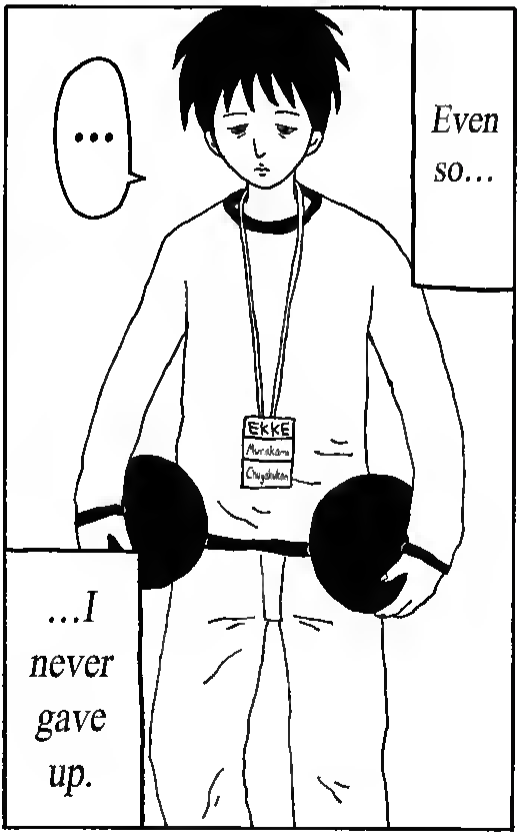

I thought getting published would be a lot easier than this. I had no idea that such a huge wall was going to stand in my way...
hop
hop
No, wait ...
H
Oguro
It really did feel like there was no way.
PHEW, MADE IT...
peek
hanh
KLUTCH KLUTCH
FWOOOOSH
hanh
I'd climb and climb, higher and higher...
...

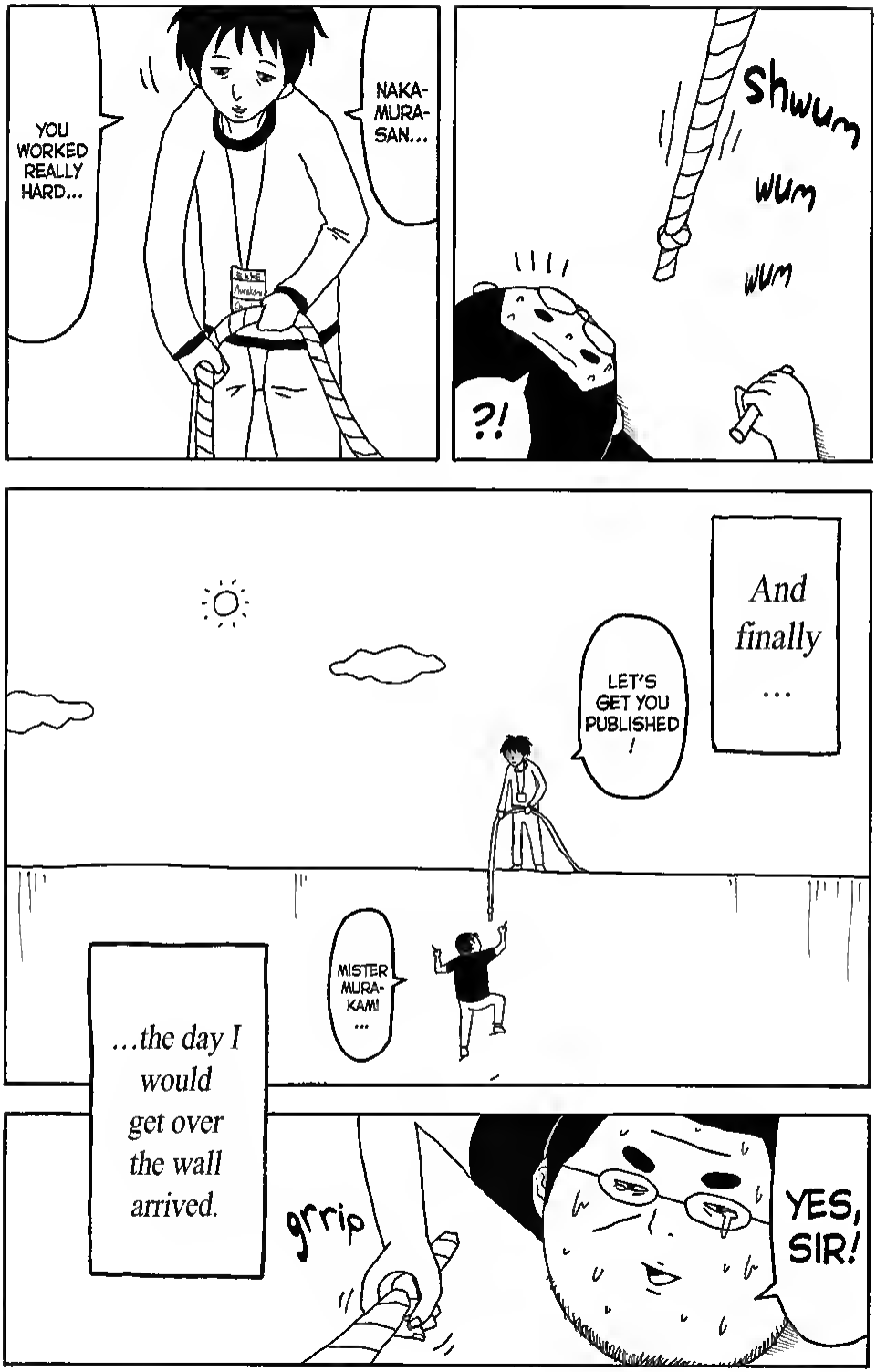
Rejection
TSUN
REJECTED !!
BWONNNK
BYOOOOOM
...only to be pushed back down.
KATATATTTT

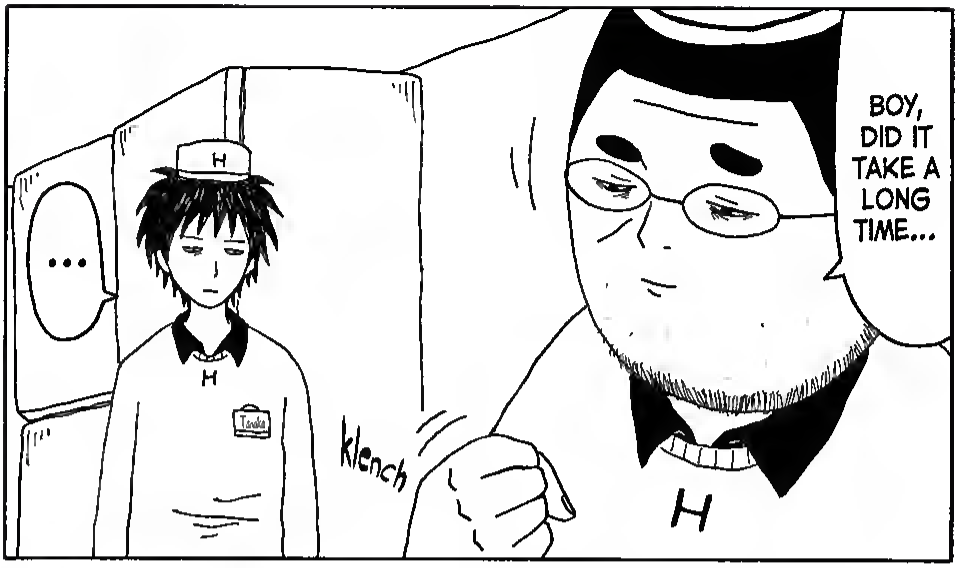

How many times had I been shoved back down?
NOT AGAIN ...
Rejection
Rejection
Rejection
Reject

MURAKAMI... I'M GONNA KILL YOU...

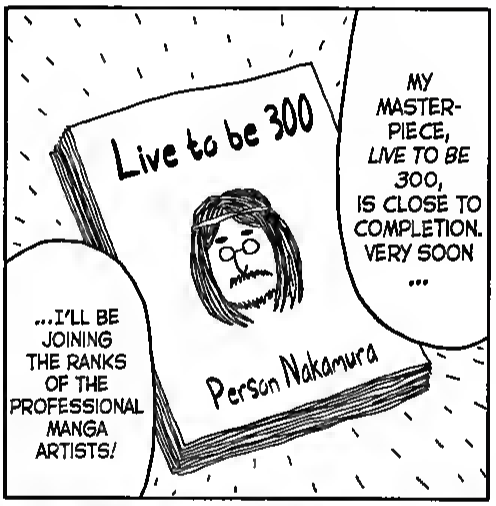
...


...
Even so...
EKKE
...I never gave up.


YOU WORKED REALLY HARD...
NAKA-MURA-SAN...
Shwum
wum
wum
?!
And finally ...
LET'S GET YOU PUBLISHED!
MISTER MURA-KAMI ...
...the day I would get over the wall arrived.
grrip
YES, SIR!


...
BOY, DID IT TAKE A LONG TIME...
klench
H

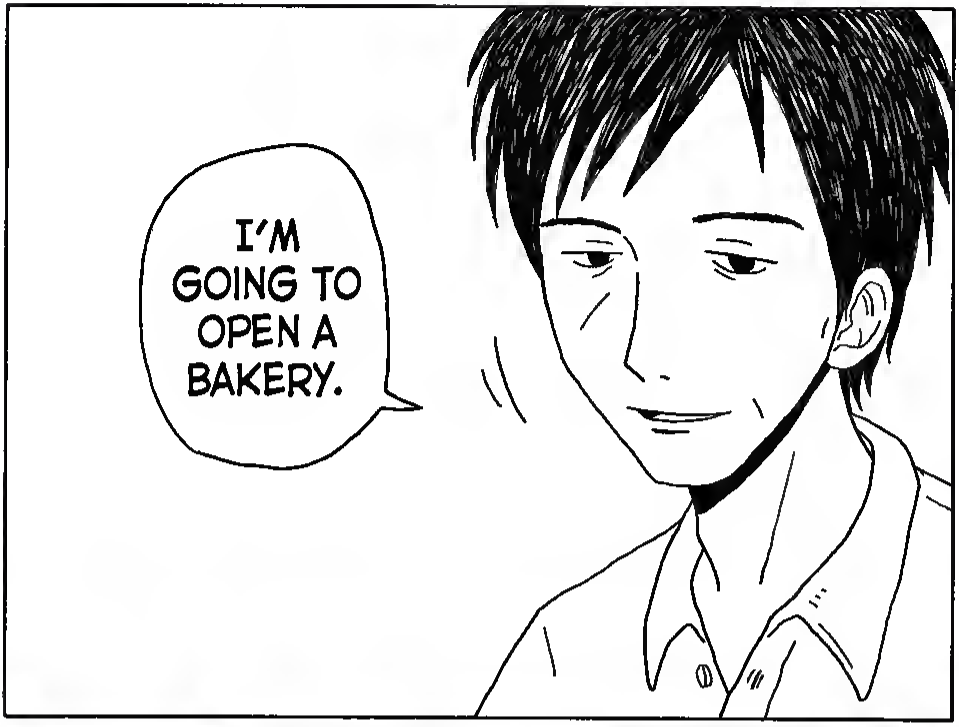
MANAGER* (*NICKNAME) ...ARE YOU GOING TO QUIT WORKING HERE WHEN YOU GET PUBLISHED?
Don't quit before I do...
I'LL REALLY MISS YOU.
H

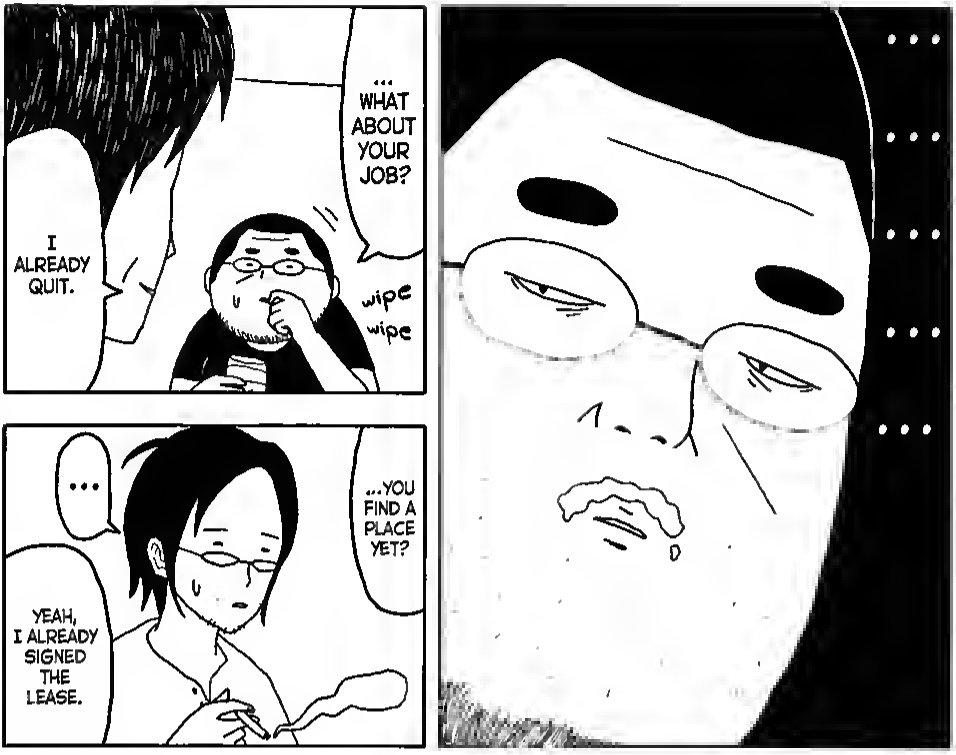

Live to be 300
Person Nakamura
MY MASTER-PIECE, LIVE TO BE 300, IS CLOSE TO COMPLETION. VERY SOON ...
...I'LL BE JOINING THE RANKS OF THE PROFESSIONAL MANGA ARTISTS!

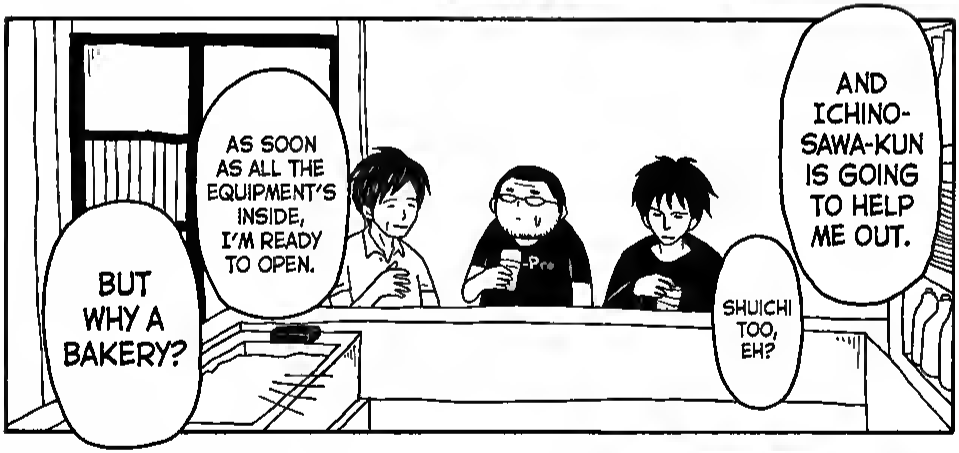
ha ha ha ha
To Tanaka
Person Nakamura
...
RELAX, TANAKA... YOU'LL BE THE VERY FIRST TO RECEIVE MY AUTOGRAPH!

klink
HERE'S TO A NEW BEGINNING!
Charcoal Grill Hiro
Hiro
Sake
Sake
Sake
CHEERS!
nod
TO A NEW BEGINNING.

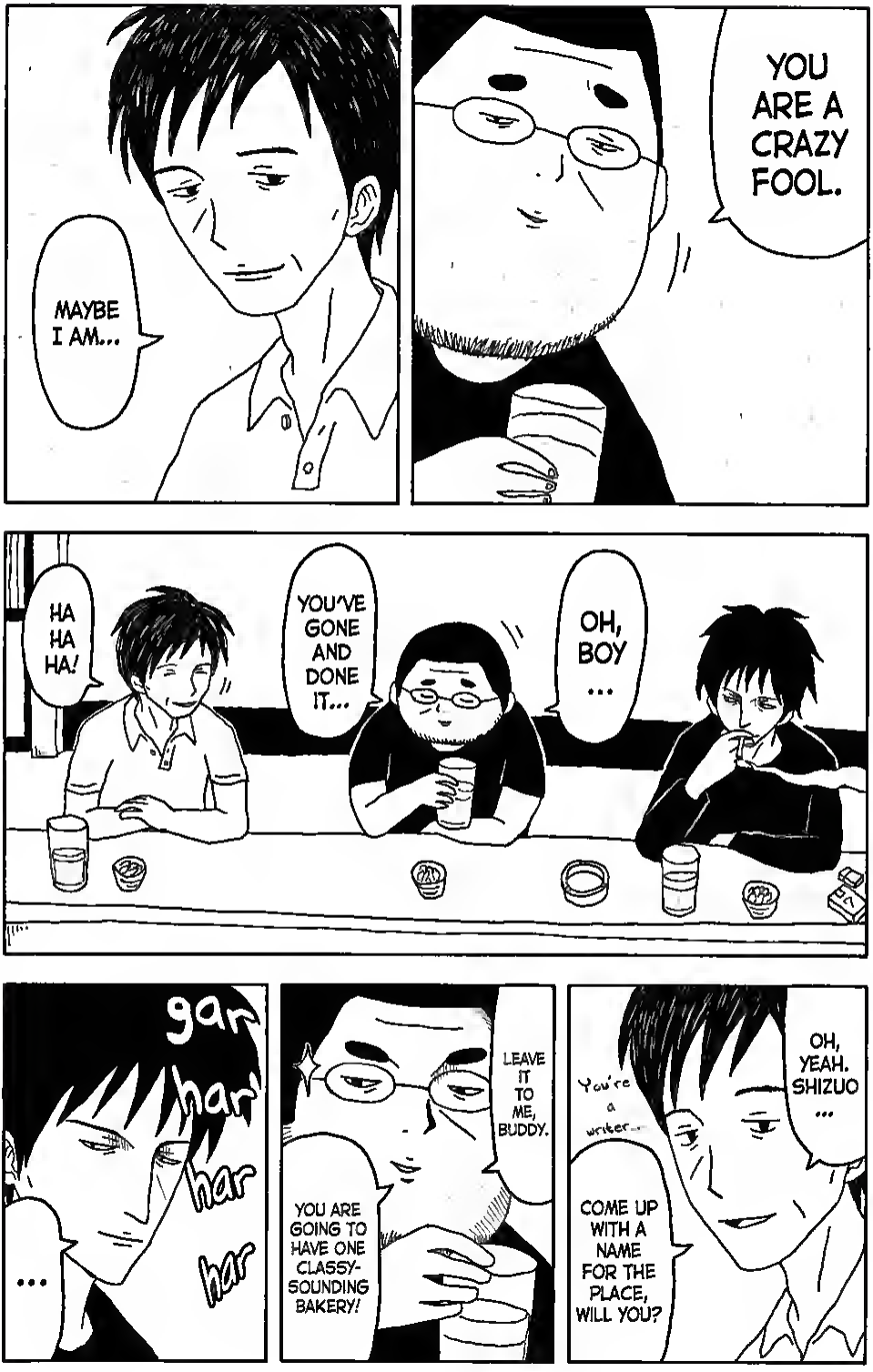
Calling you out here...
SORRY ABOUT THIS. I KNOW YOU'RE REAL BUSY...
nod
RATTA RATTA-RATTA
NEVER MIND, MIYATA OLD BUDDY...
Semi-Pro
EVEN (SLATED-TO-BE) PROFESSIONAL MANGA ARTISTS NEED A LITTLE BREATHER ONCE IN A WHILE.
IS THAT ON THE HOUSE?
Just kidding
...
...
KUNI-SAN, A BREWSKI FOR ME.
Semi-Pro
gulp
WELL, THEN... MIYATA, MY FRIEND. WHAT DID YOU WANT TO SEE ME ABOUT?


I'M GOING TO OPEN A BAKERY.


...
WHAT ABOUT YOUR JOB?
wipe wipe
I ALREADY QUIT.
...
...YOU FIND A PLACE YET?
YEAH, I ALREADY SIGNED THE LEASE.
...

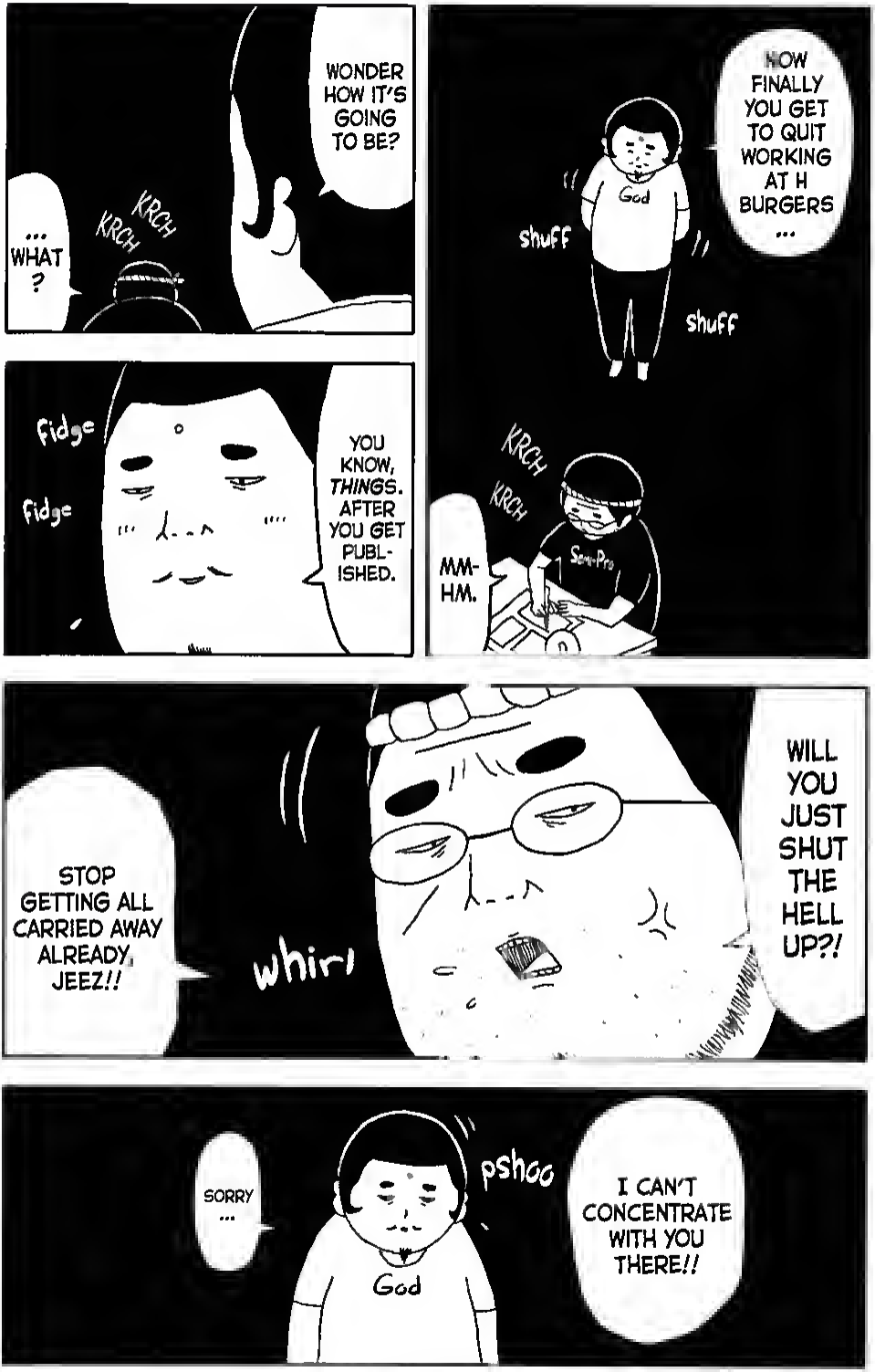

AND ICHINO-SAWA-KUN IS GOING TO HELP ME OUT.
SHUICHI TOO, EH?
AS SOON AS ALL THE EQUIPMENT'S INSIDE, I'M READY TO OPEN.
BUT WHY A BAKERY?

MASAO LOVES BREAD...
And pastries and stuff.
MIYATA ...


MAYBE I AM...
YOU ARE A CRAZY FOOL.
HA HA HA!
YOU'VE GONE AND DONE IT...
OH, BOY ...
...
gar har har har
YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE ONE CLASSY-SOUNDING BAKERY!
LEAVE IT TO ME, BUDDY.
You're a writer...
COME UP WITH A NAME FOR THE PLACE, WILL YOU?
OH, YEAH. SHIZUO ...

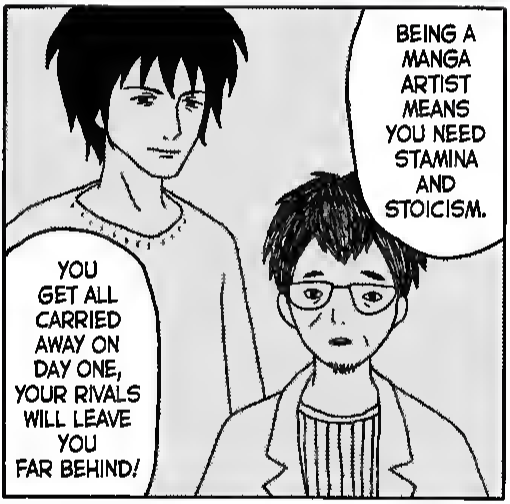
• Bread & Pastries / Miyata
• Bakery Osamu
• Bunderful
• Le Miyata
• Bread! Bread! Bread!
• Ultraburn Osamu
• Oh Buns!
pastries
or, pasties
Superman
poop
HFFFF...
A
B
THIS IS TURNING OUT TO BE A LOT HARDER THAN I EXPECTED... I THOUGHT COMING UP WITH A BAKERY NAME WOULD BE A PIECE OF CAKE...
MMM-MGH...
I'LL WORK ON MY MANGA FIRST, AND THEN ...
I KNOW!
KRCH
KRCH
KRCH
KRCH
KRCH
I BETTER HUSTLE AND GET PUBLISHED SOON...
Semi-Pro
WOW, THOUGH... MIYATA BECOMING A BAKER, OF ALL THINGS...

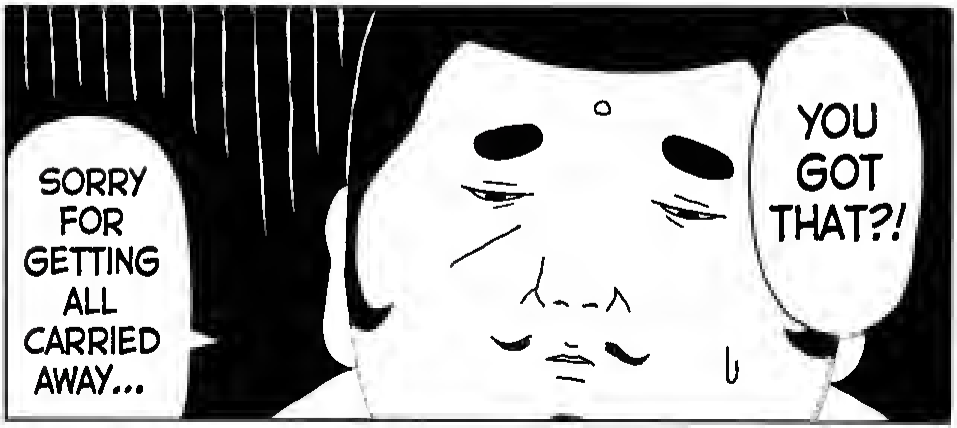
FINALLY, EH? AFTER ALL THIS TIME...
Flik
YOU'RE GETTING PUBLISHED.
God
KRCH KRCH
UH-HUH ...

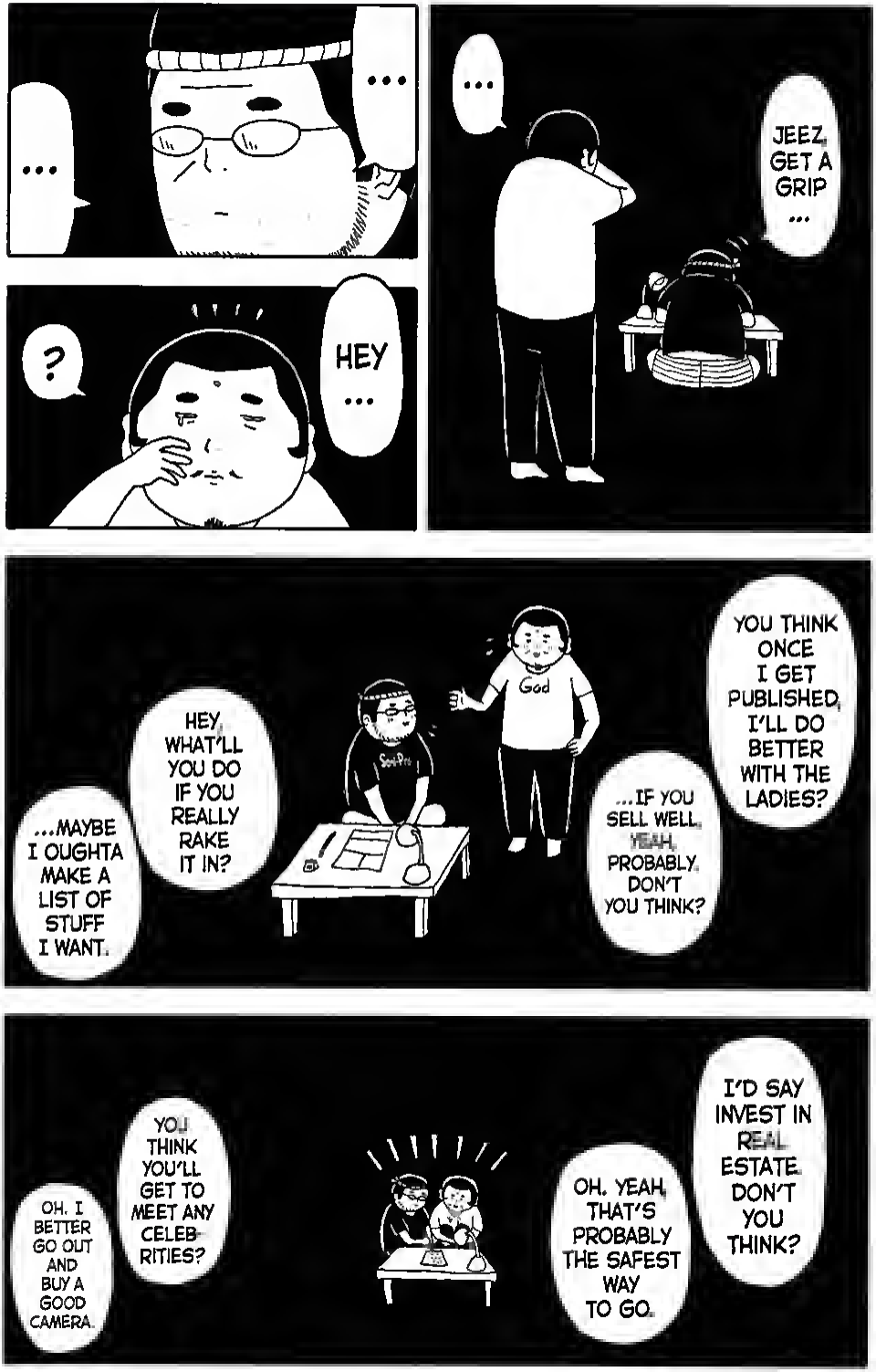

WONDER HOW IT'S GOING TO BE?
KRCH KRCH
... WHAT ?
NOW FINALLY YOU GET TO QUIT WORKING AT H BURGERS ...
God
shuff
shuff
KRCH KRCH
MM-HM.
Semi-Pro
fidge
fidge
YOU KNOW, THINGS. AFTER YOU GET PUBL-ISHED.
WILL YOU JUST SHUT THE HELL UP?!
whirl
STOP GETTING ALL CARRIED AWAY ALREADY, JEEZ!!
pshoo
I CAN'T CONCENTRATE WITH YOU THERE!!
God
SORRY ...

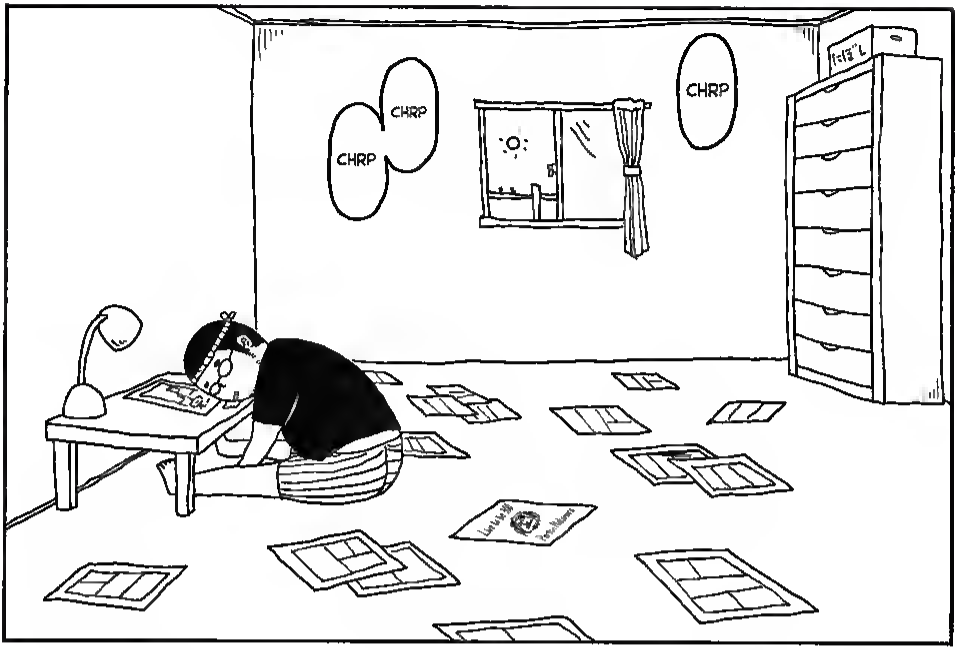
GETTING PUBLISHED IS JUST REACHING THE STARTING LINE, OKAY?!
LISTEN TO ME...
...
Semi-Pro

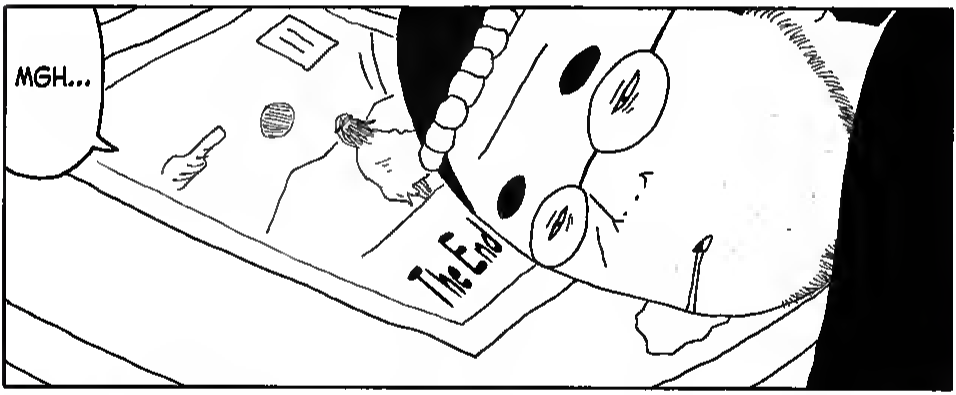
IN THIS INDUSTRY, STARTING OUT ISN'T THE HARD PART.
THE HARD PART IS TO KEEP GOING...
Semi-Pro

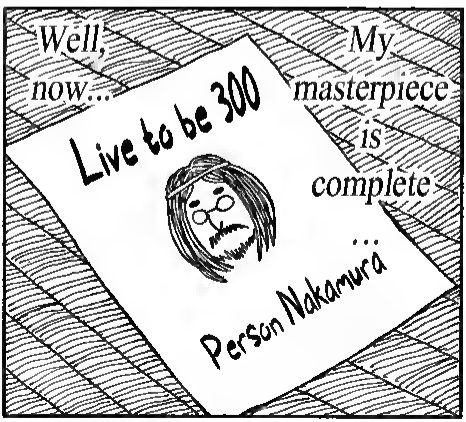

BEING A MANGA ARTIST MEANS YOU NEED STAMINA AND STOICISM.
YOU GET ALL CARRIED AWAY ON DAY ONE, YOUR RIVALS WILL LEAVE YOU FAR BEHIND!

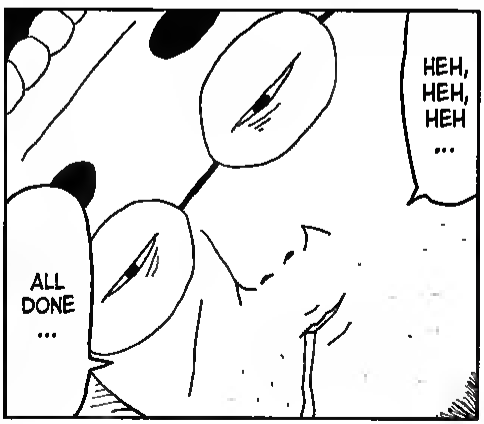

SORRY FOR GETTING ALL CARRIED AWAY...
YOU GOT THAT?!

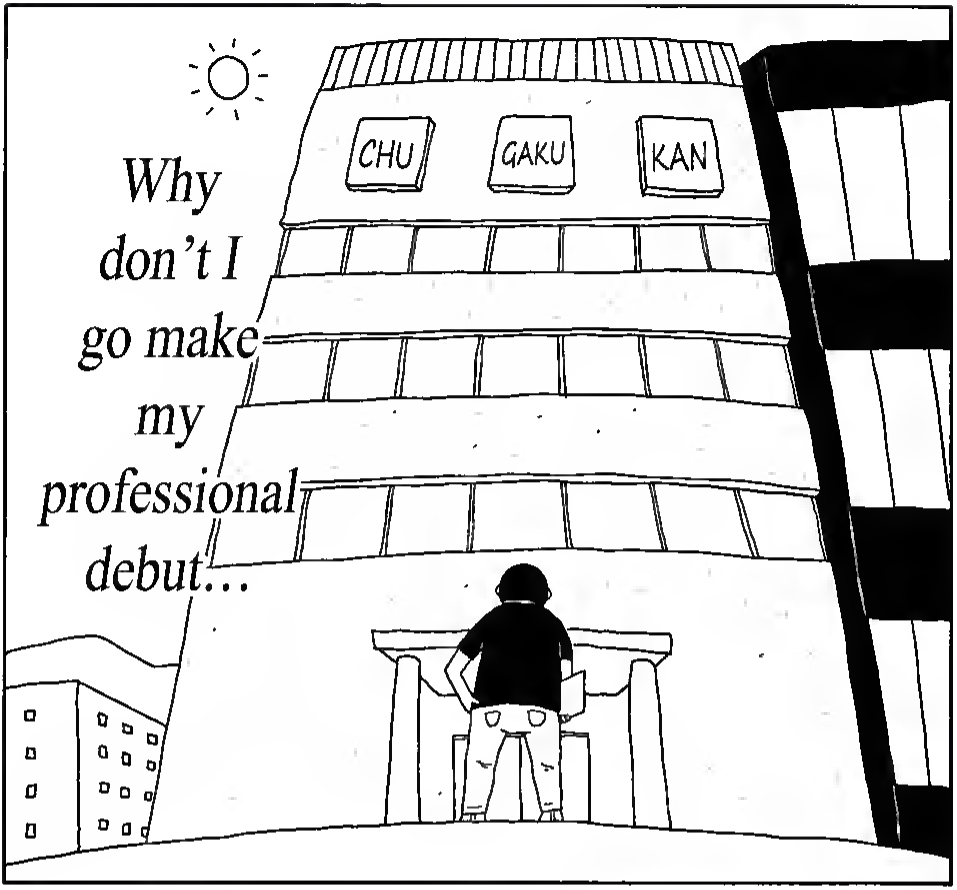

...
...
JEEZ. GET A GRIP ...
HEY ...
?
God
...MAYBE I OUGHTA MAKE A LIST OF STUFF I WANT.
HEY, WHAT'LL YOU DO IF YOU REALLY RAKE IT IN?
...IF YOU SELL WELL. YEAH, PROBABLY. DON'T YOU THINK?
YOU THINK ONCE I GET PUBLISHED, I'LL DO BETTER WITH THE LADIES?
OH. I BETTER GO OUT AND BUY A GOOD CAMERA.
YOU THINK YOU'LL GET TO MEET ANY CELEBRITIES?
OH. YEAH, THAT'S PROBABLY THE SAFEST WAY TO GO.
I'D SAY INVEST IN REAL ESTATE. DON'T YOU THINK?

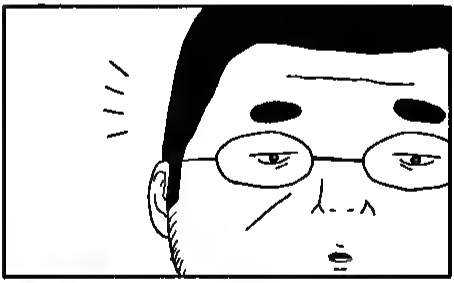

CHRP
CHRP
CHRP

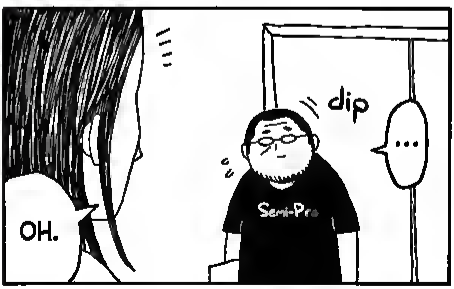

MGH...
The End


Well, now...
Live to be 300
My masterpiece is complete ...
Person Nakamura

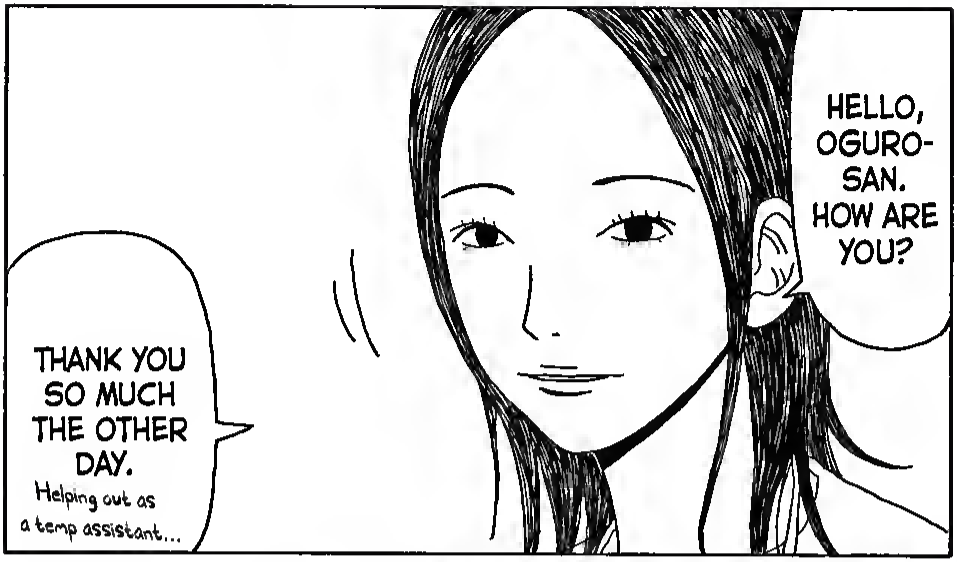

HEH, HEH, HEH ...
ALL DONE ...

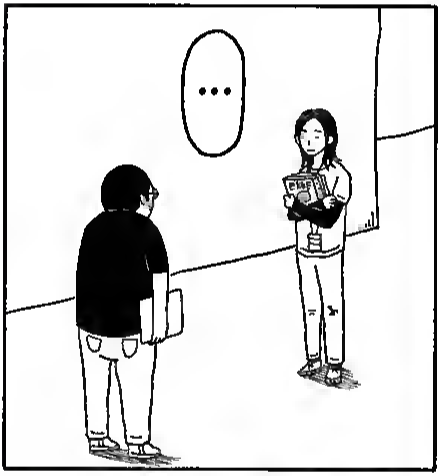

Why don't I go make my professional debut...
CHU
GAKU
KAN




dip
...
OH.

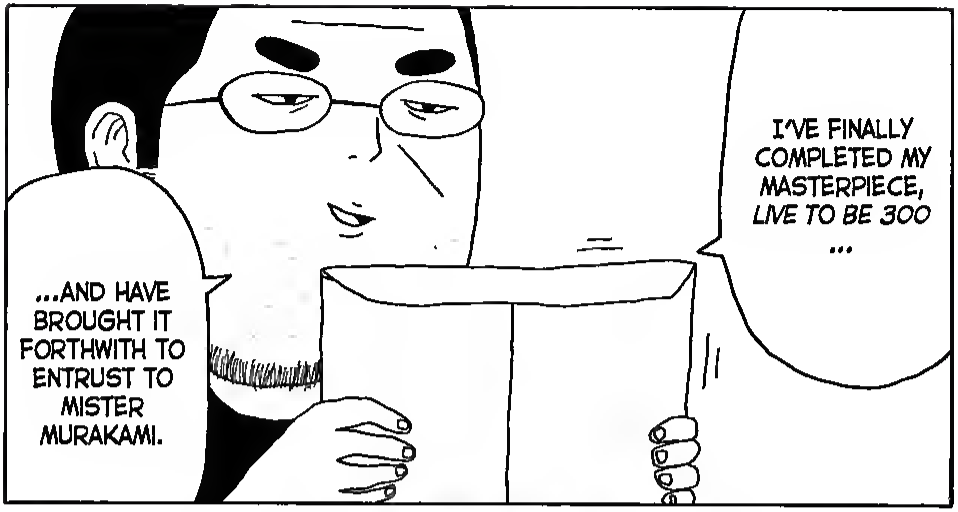
1 2 3 4 5 6
DING

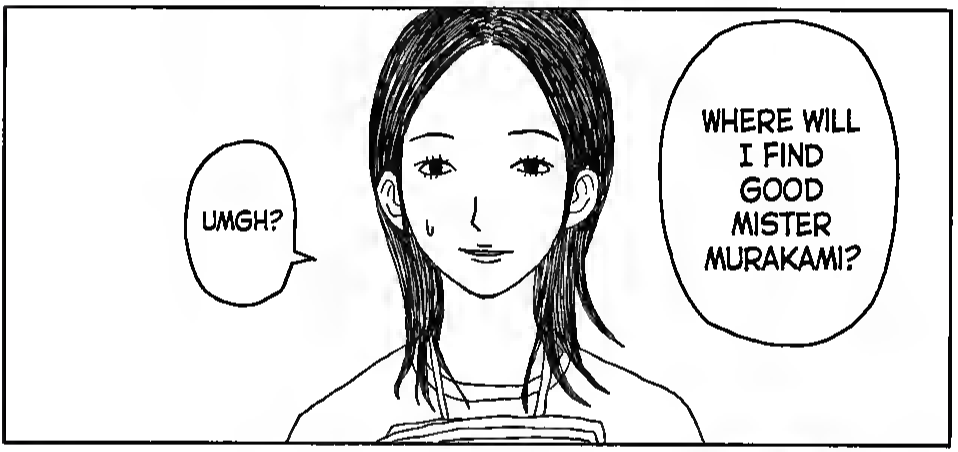

HELLO, OGURO-SAN. HOW ARE YOU?
THANK YOU SO MUCH THE OTHER DAY.
Helping out as a temp assistant...


...

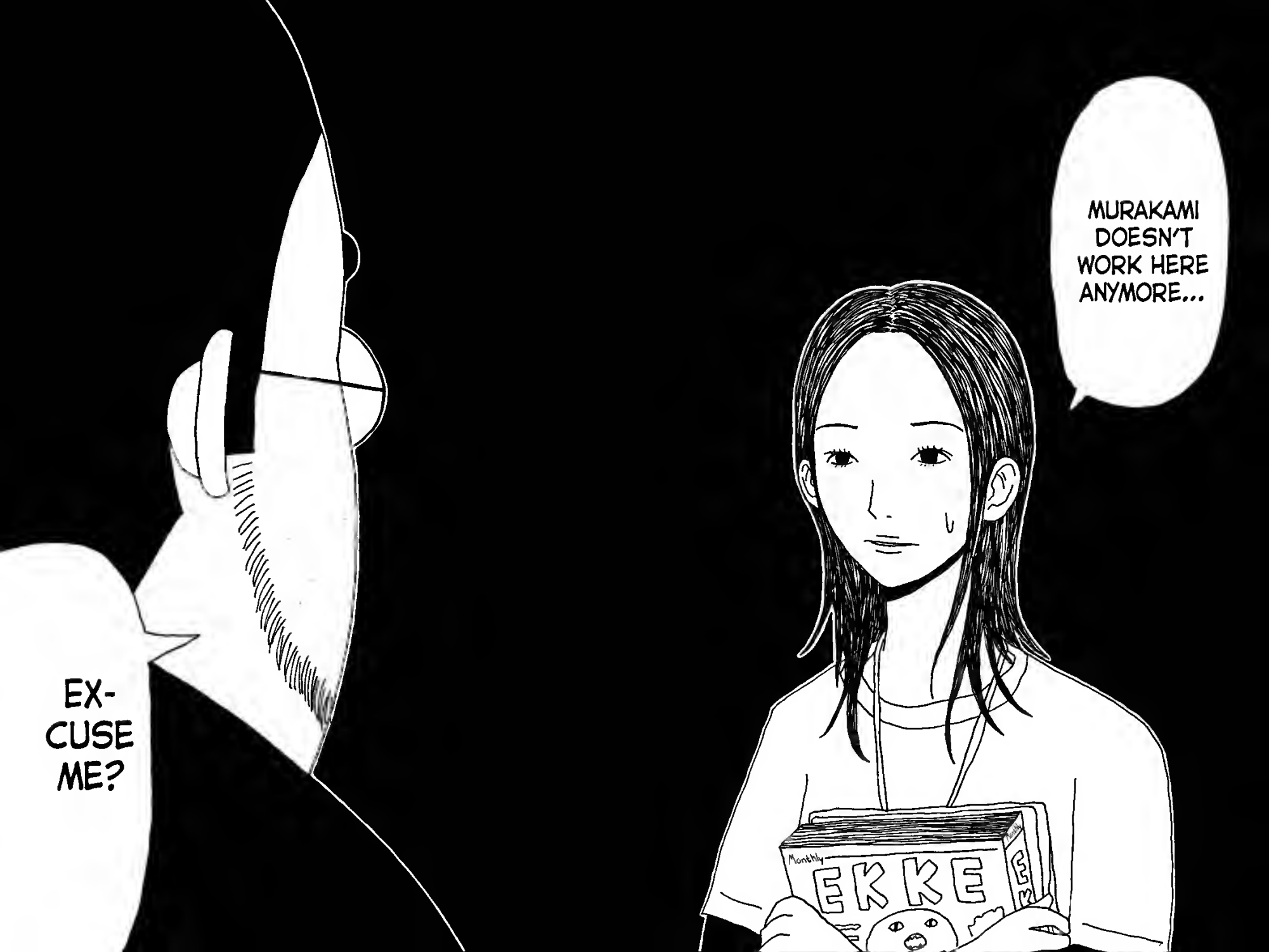
NOT AT ALL ...
Semi-Pro
throb

UH... AND YOU'RE HERE TODAY FOR...?
OH ...
EKKE

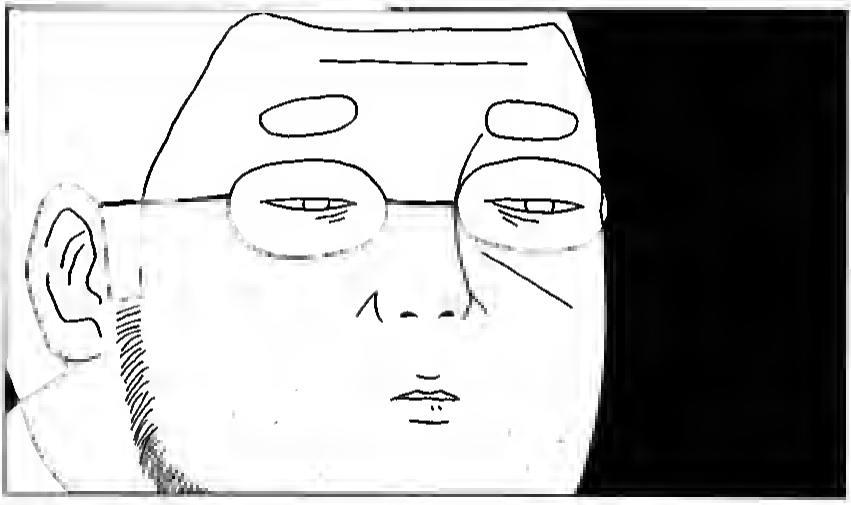

I'VE FINALLY COMPLETED MY MASTERPIECE, *LIVE TO BE 300* ...
...AND HAVE BROUGHT IT FORTHWITH TO ENTRUST TO MISTER MURAKAMI.

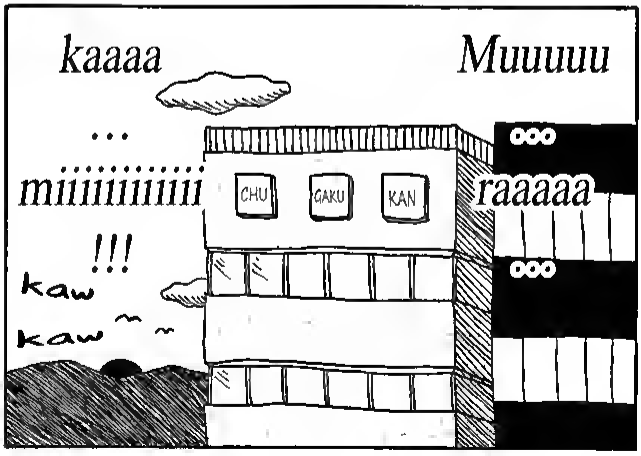

WHERE WILL I FIND GOOD MISTER MURAKAMI?
UMGH?

ERRR-MMM...
?


EX-
CUSE
ME?
MURAKAMI
DOESN'T
WORK HERE
ANYMORE...
Monthly
EKKE

HE QUIT HIS JOB HERE AT CHUGAKUKAN ...




kaaaa
...
miiiiiiiiii
!!!
kaw
kaw ~ ~
Muuuuu
ooo
raaaaa
ooo
CHU
GAKU
KAN

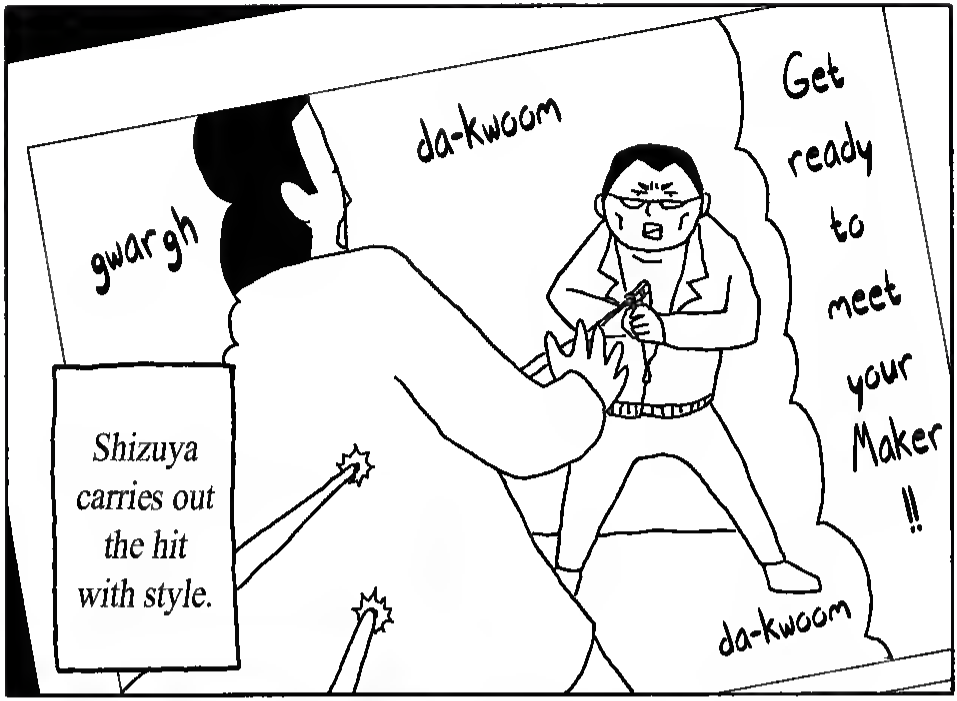
Semi-Pro
...

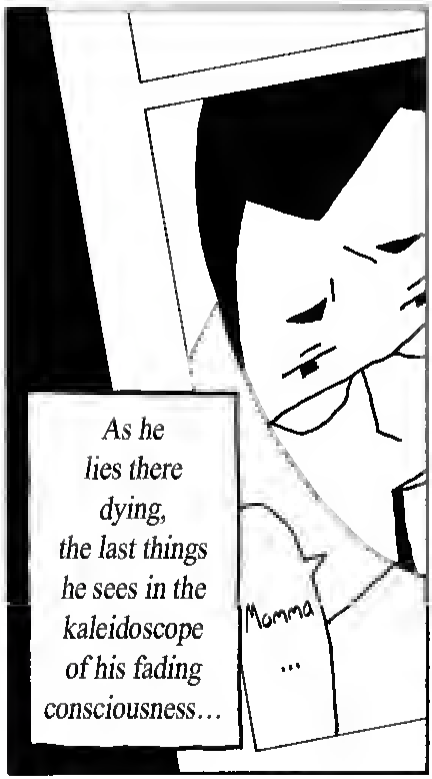
Live to be 300
Person Nakamura

Bonus Chapter:

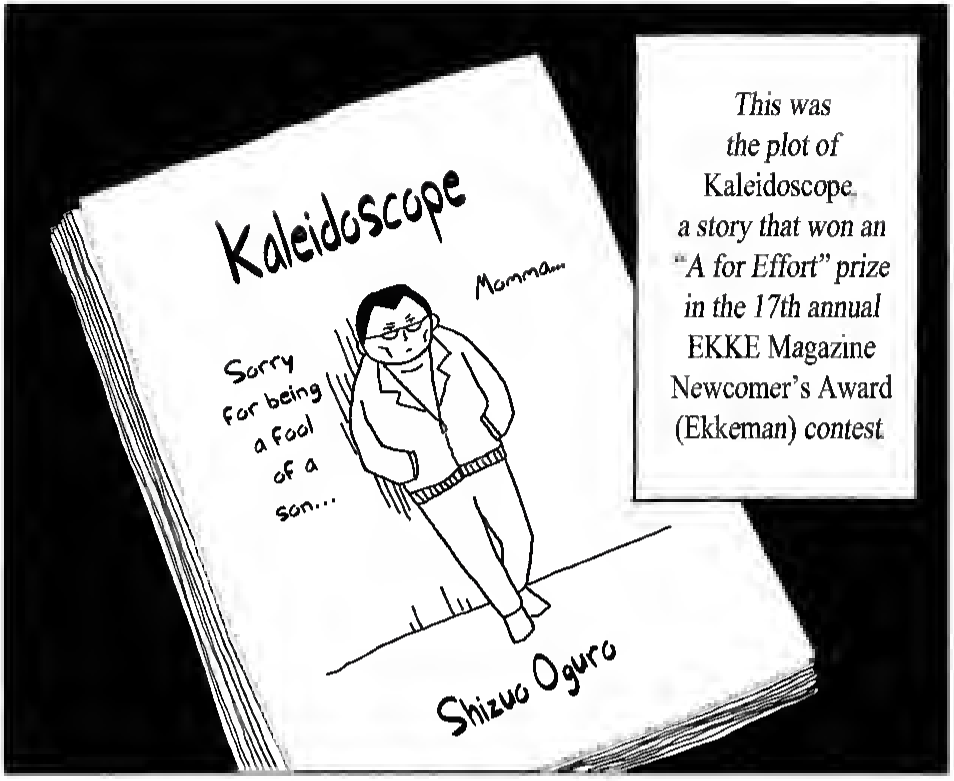
Mister Murakami, Manga Editor

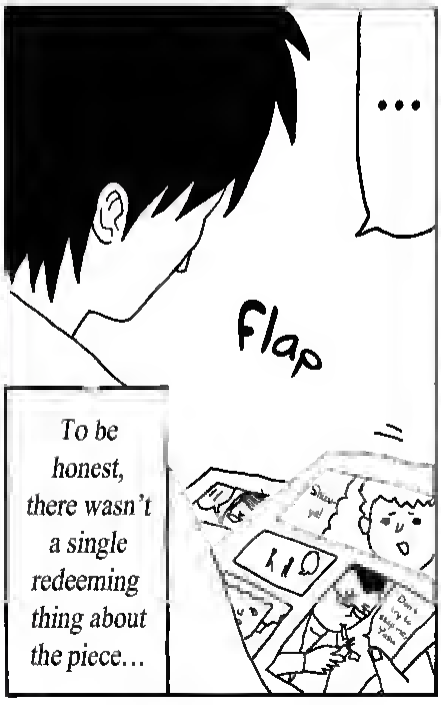
A small-time hood named Shizuya approaches his boss...
Boss ...
...with a way to end the bloody turf wars they'd been involved in.
Let me do it, Boss !!
Kill the rival gang's leader. Shizuya would be the hitman.

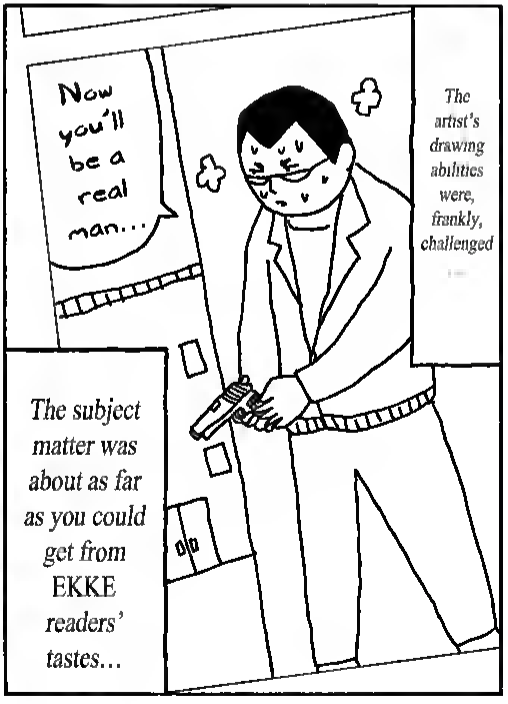

gwar gh
da-kwoom
Get ready to meet your Maker !!
Shizuya carries out the hit with style.
da-kwoom

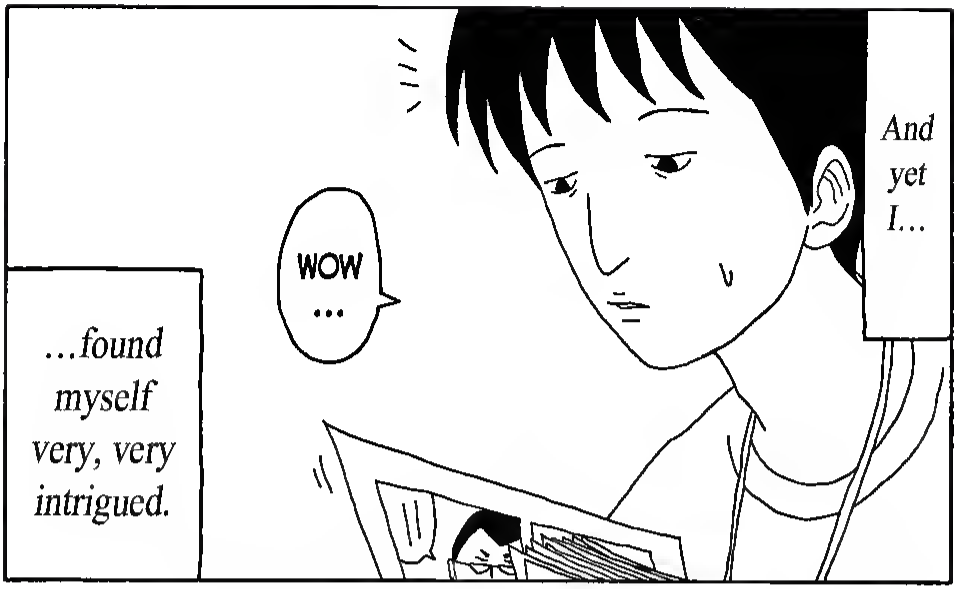

As he lies there dying, the last things he sees in the kaleidoscope of his fading consciousness…
Momma …

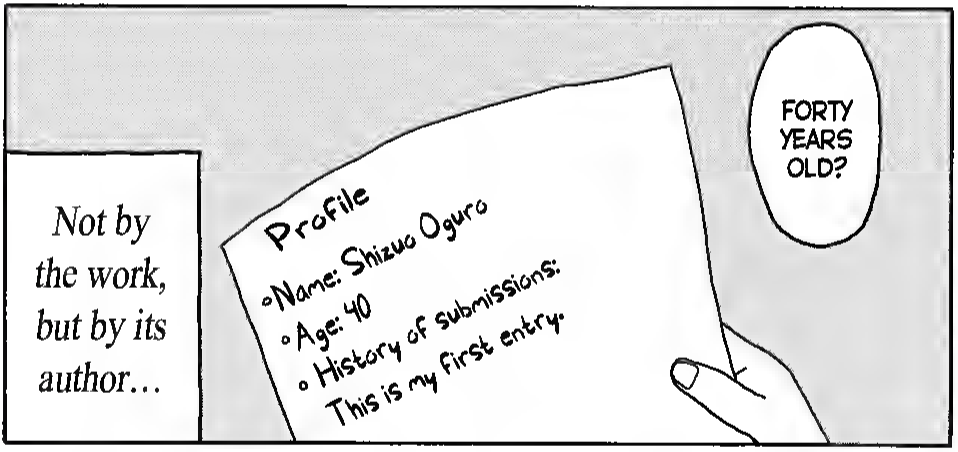
Gwoff!
Fwump
But he, too, has taken dozens of bullets…

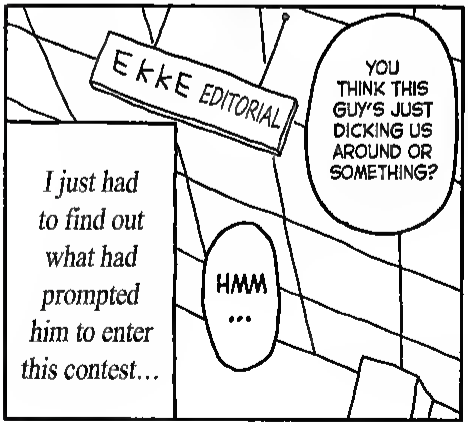

Kaleidoscope
Momma...
Sorry for being a fool of a son...
Shizuo Oguro
This was the plot of Kaleidoscope, a story that won an "A for Effort" prize in the 17th annual EKKE Magazine Newcomer's Award (Ekkeman) contest.

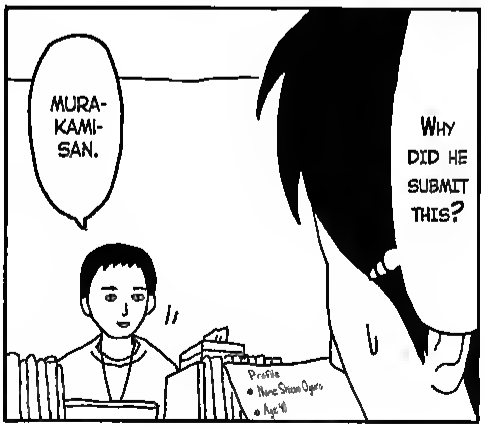

...
Flap
To be honest, there wasn't a single redeeming thing about the piece...


Now you'll be a real man...
The artist's drawing abilities were, frankly, challenged
The subject matter was about as far as you could get from EKKE readers' tastes...

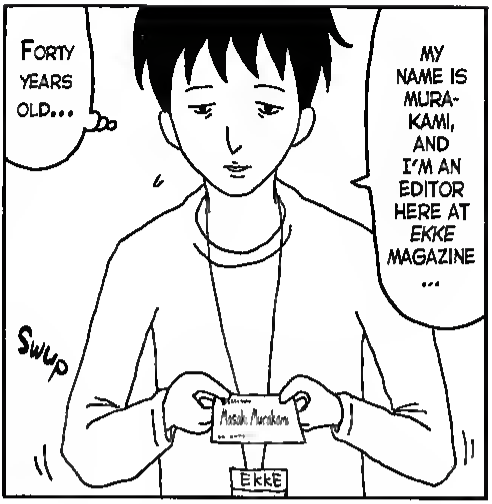

WOW ...
And yet I...
...found myself very, very intrigued.

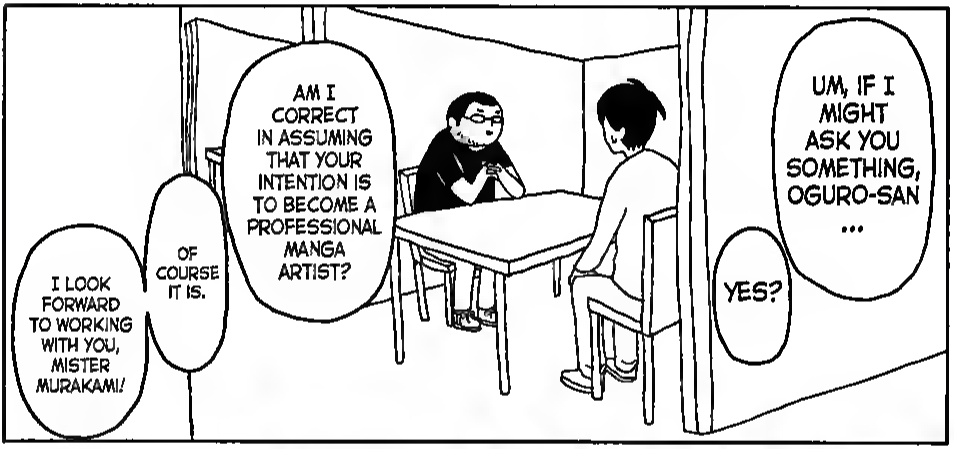

Not by the work, but by its author...
Profile
◦Name: Shizuo Oguro
◦Age: 40
◦History of submissions:
This is my first entry.
FORTY YEARS OLD?


EKKE EDITORIAL
I just had to find out what had prompted him to enter this contest...
HMM ...
YOU THINK THIS GUY'S JUST DICKING US AROUND OR SOMETHING?

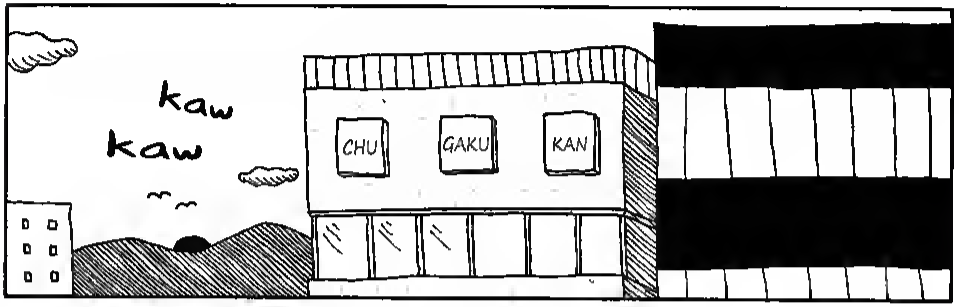

MURA-KAMI-SAN.
WHY DID HE SUBMIT THIS?

I'M SHIZUO OGURO !
FIGURE
THIS IS MY PLEASURE ENTIRELY !!

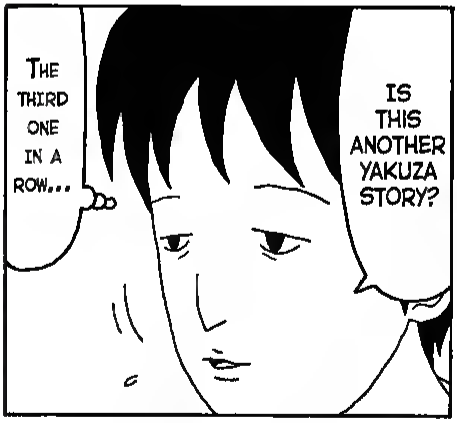



UM, IF I MIGHT ASK YOU SOMETHING, OGURO-SAN ...
YES?
AM I CORRECT IN ASSUMING THAT YOUR INTENTION IS TO BECOME A PROFESSIONAL MANGA ARTIST?
OF COURSE IT IS.
I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU, MISTER MURAKAMI!

And that is how I came to be his editor...

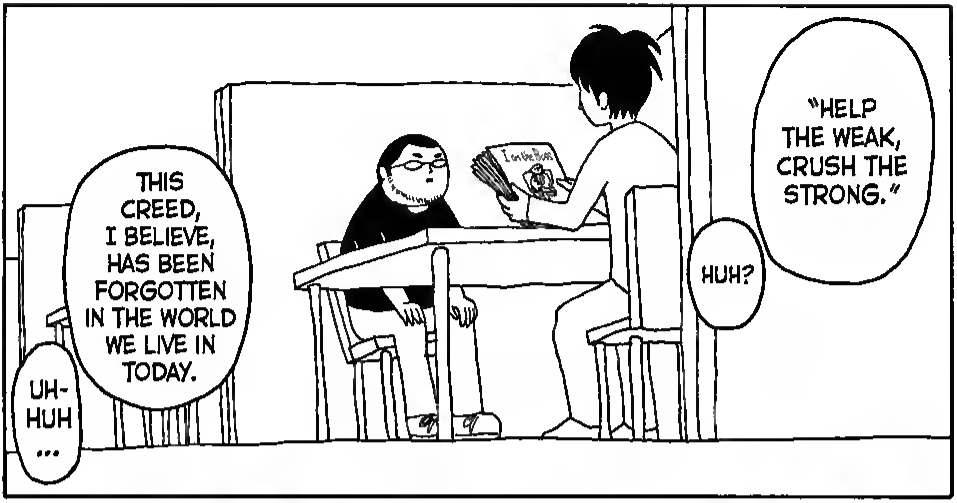

kaw
kaw
CHU
GAKU
KAN

I am the Boss
MY LATEST EFFORT!


THE THIRD ONE IN A ROW...
IS THIS ANOTHER YAKUZA STORY?

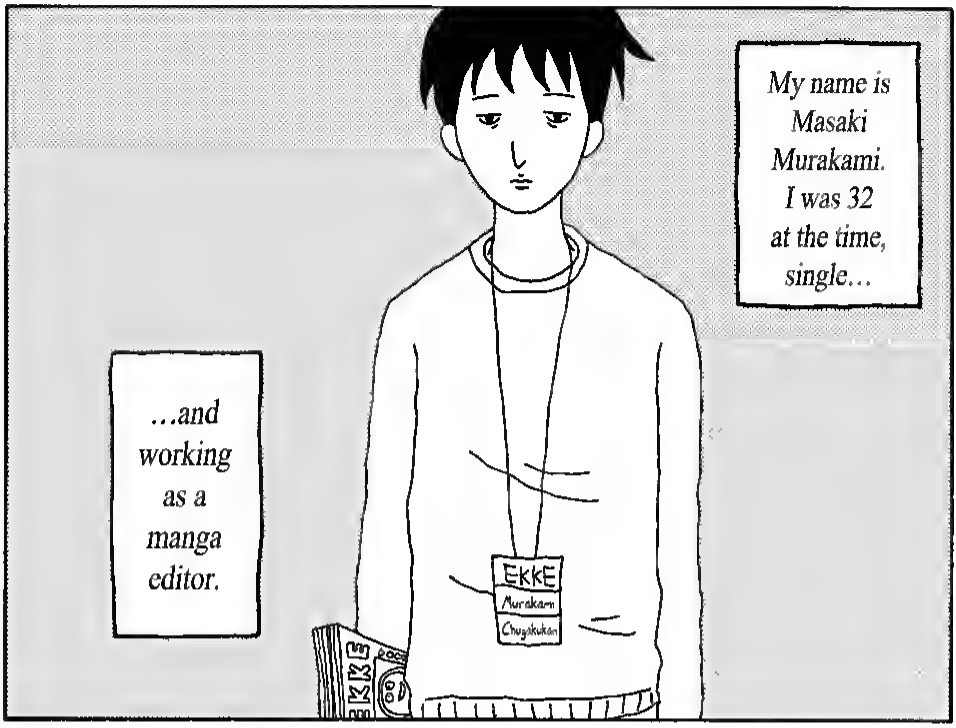
...
I HOPE YOU'LL LIKE IT!
Hoodlum
I am the Boss
Weighs a ton...

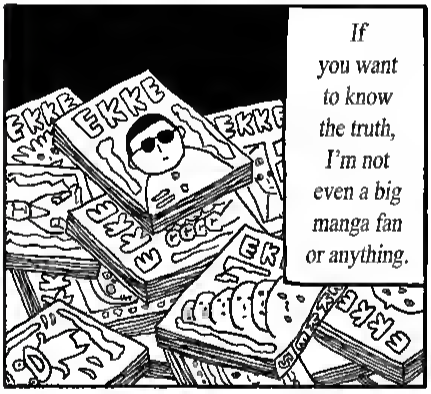
MISTER MURA-KAMI...

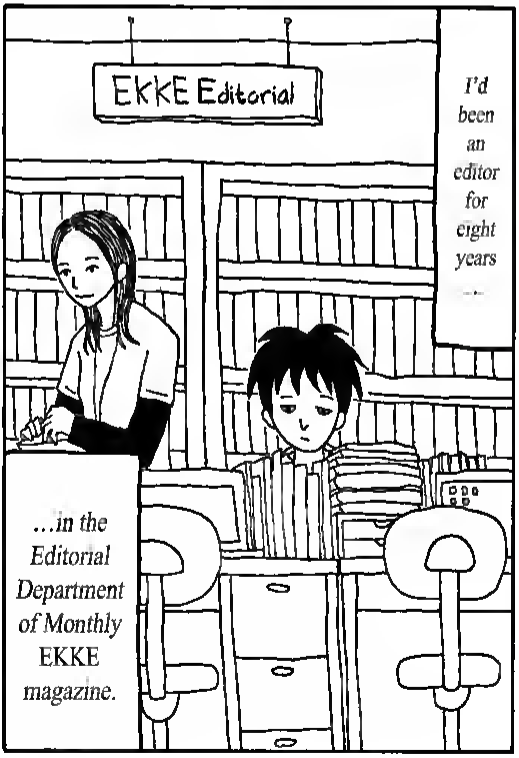

"HELP THE WEAK, CRUSH THE STRONG."
HUH?
THIS CREED, I BELIEVE, HAS BEEN FORGOTTEN IN THE WORLD WE LIVE IN TODAY.
UH-HUH ...

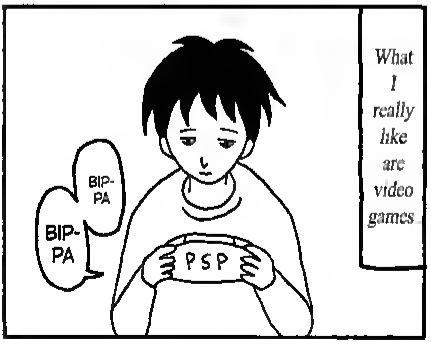
I SEE ...
AND THEREFORE I HAVE UNDERTAKEN IT AS MY MISSION TO MAKE THE CHIVALROUS SPIRIT WHICH UNDERLIES YAKUZA SOCIETY MORE WIDELY KNOWN.
It's not like I had nothing better to do.

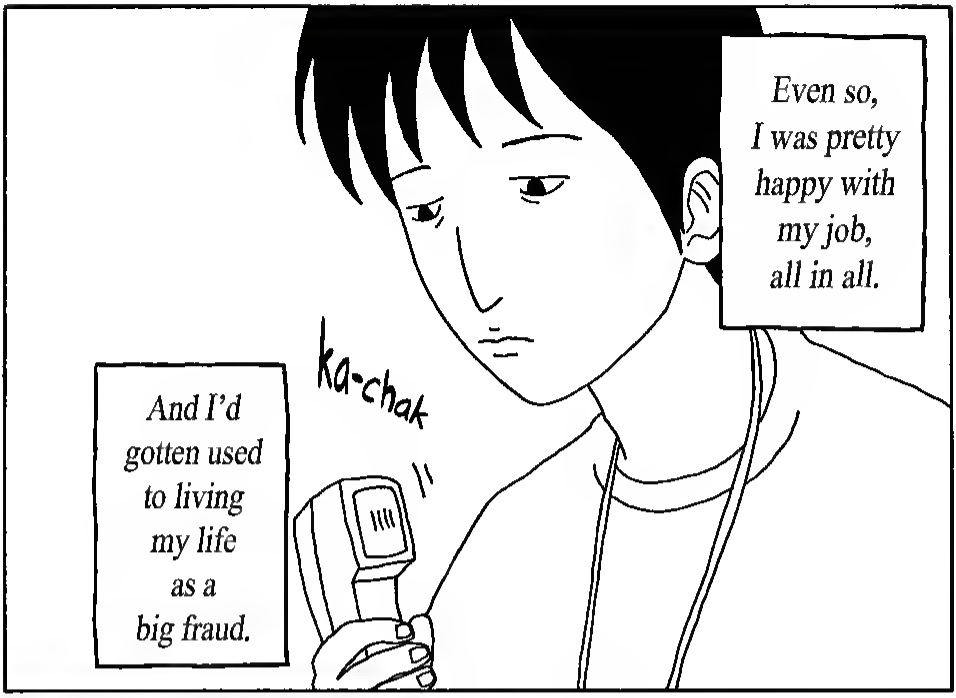
BUT DIDN'T WE SAY LAST TIME THAT YOU'D GIVE YAKUZA STORIES A REST AND...
WELL, IT'S AN ADMIRABLE CREED, I AGREE ...
In fact, I really didn't have the time to be wasting on a newcomer who had almost no chance of getting published.
Yet, for some reason, I found myself making time for meetings with Oguro-san...


My name is Masaki Murakami. I was 32 at the time, single…
…and working as a manga editor.
EKKE
Murakami
Chuyokukan

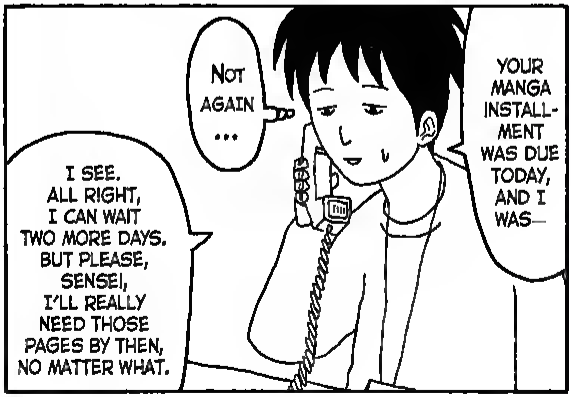

If you want to know the truth, I'm not even a big manga fan or anything.

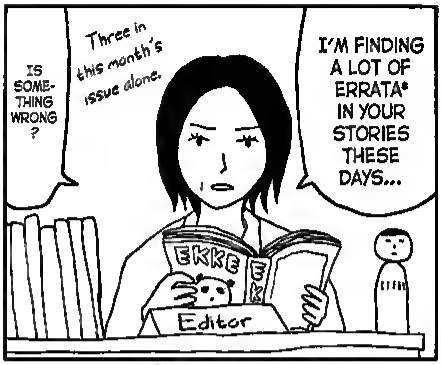

EKKE Editorial
I'd been an editor for eight years
…in the Editorial Department of Monthly EKKE magazine.


What I really like are video games
BIP-PA
BIP-PA
PSP

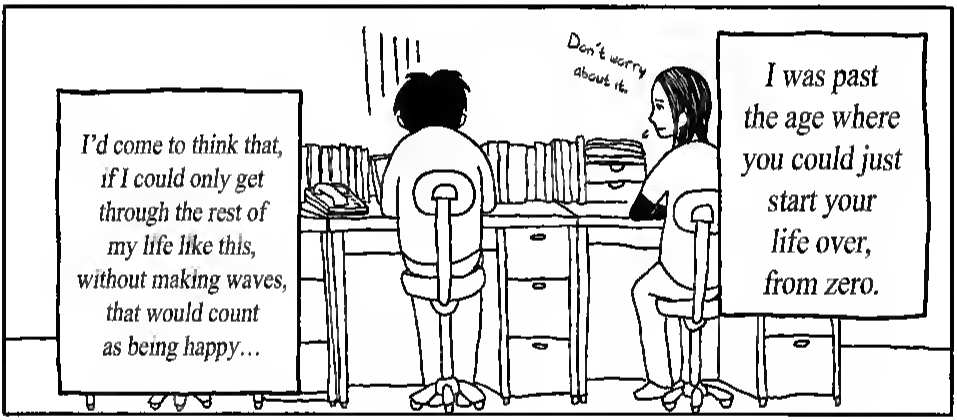


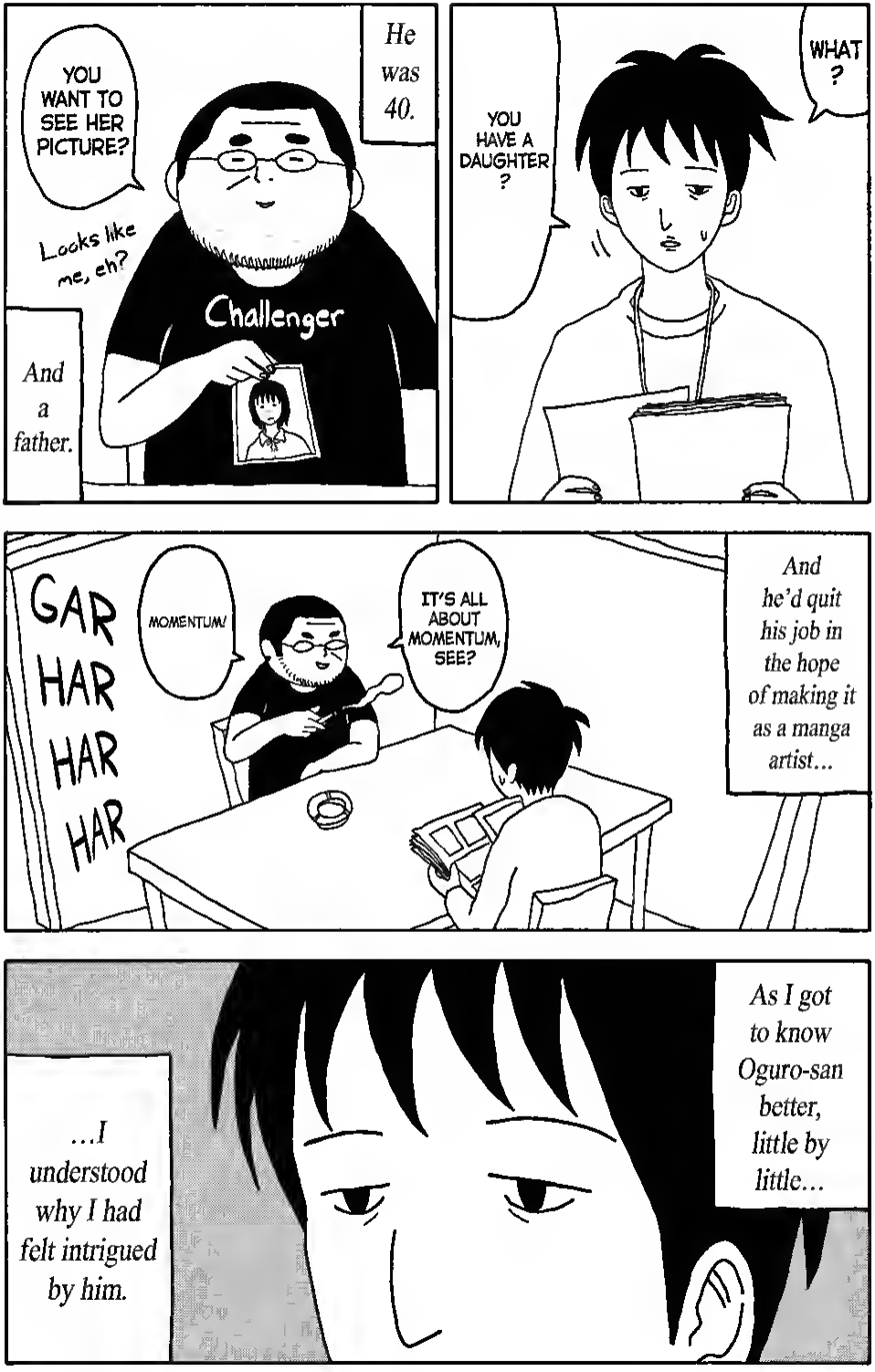
Life is short.

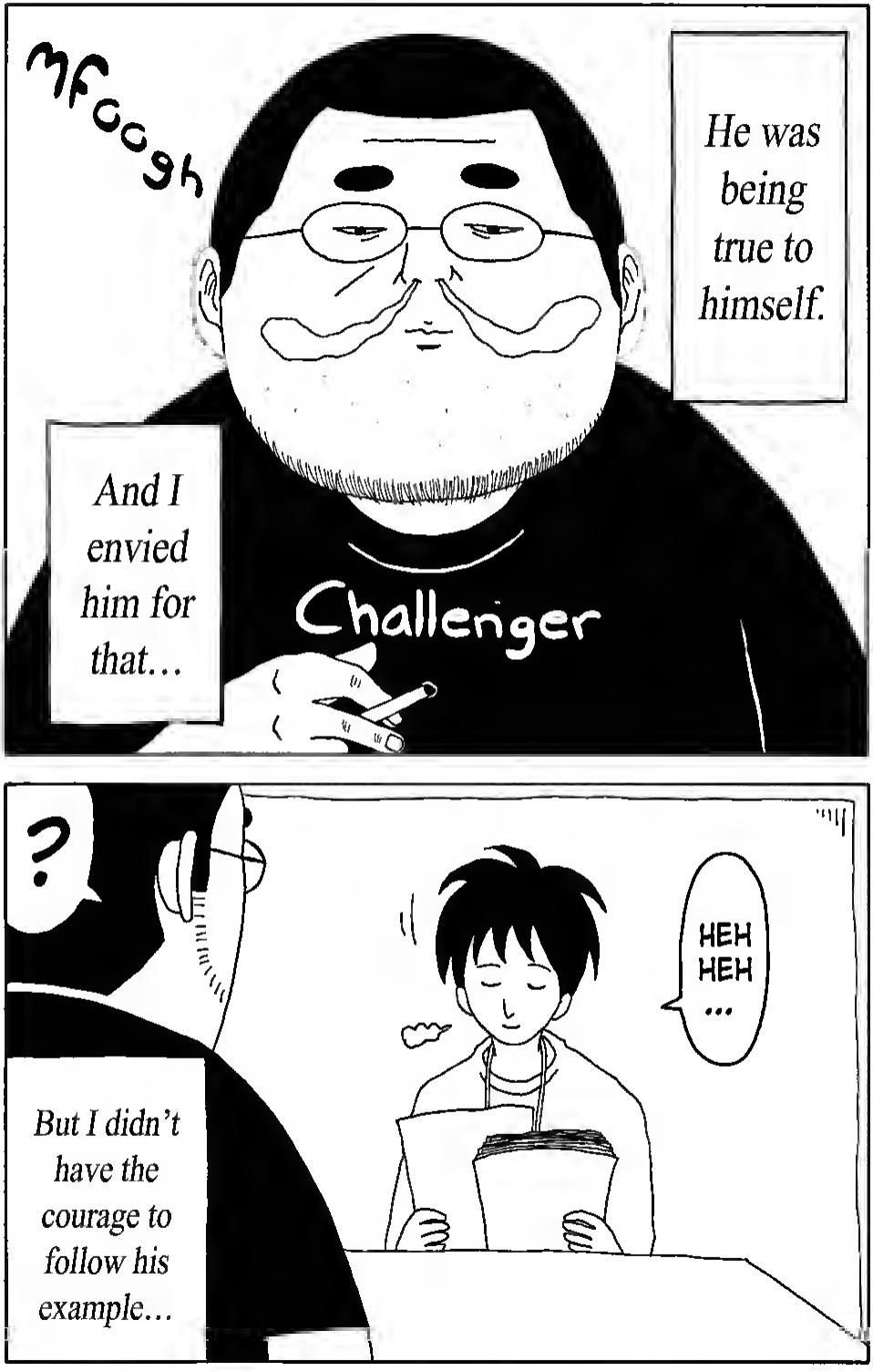

NOT AGAIN ...
YOUR MANGA INSTALL-MENT WAS DUE TODAY, AND I WAS—
I SEE. ALL RIGHT, I CAN WAIT TWO MORE DAYS. BUT PLEASE, SENSEI, I'LL REALLY NEED THOSE PAGES BY THEN, NO MATTER WHAT.

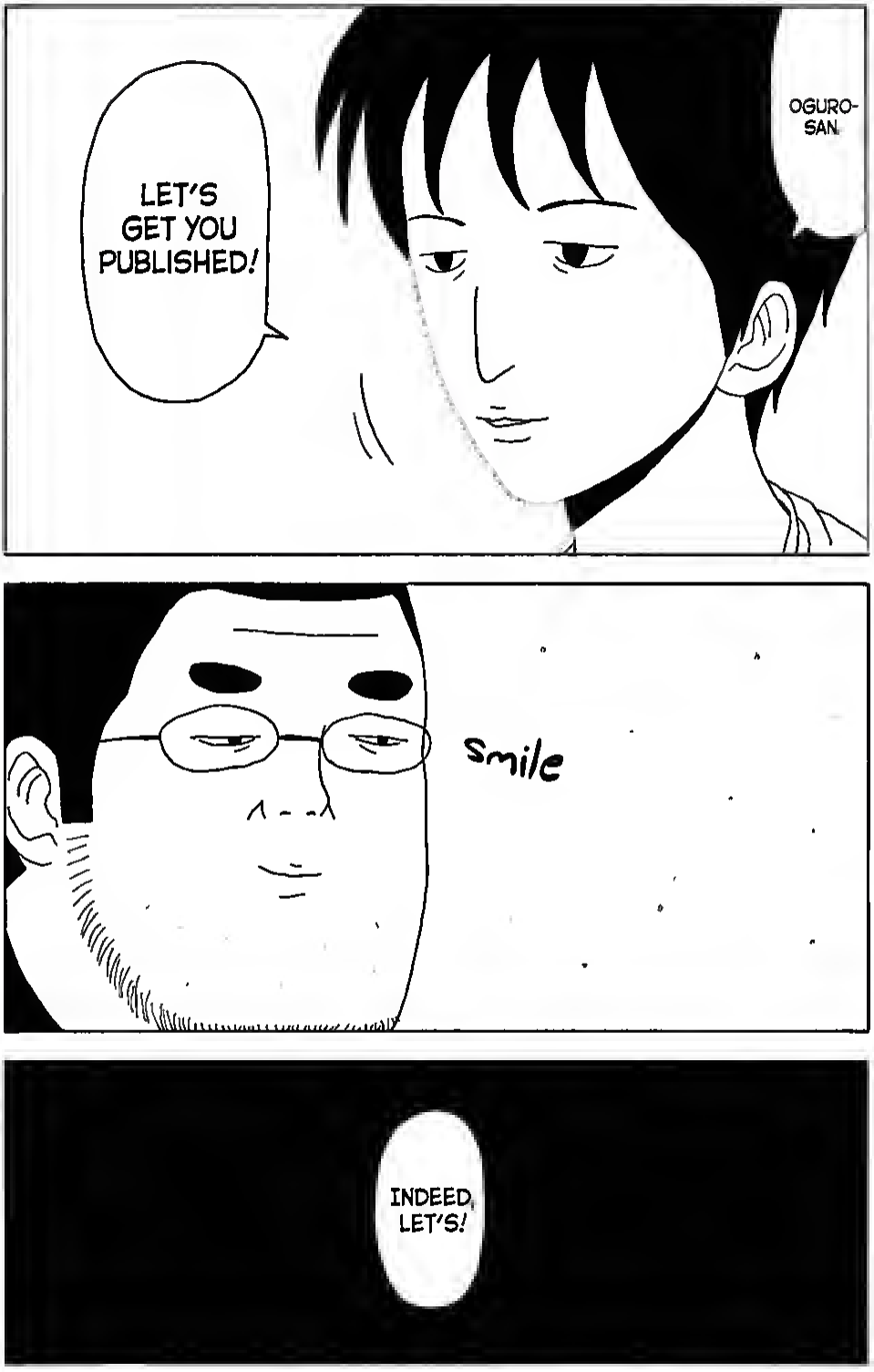


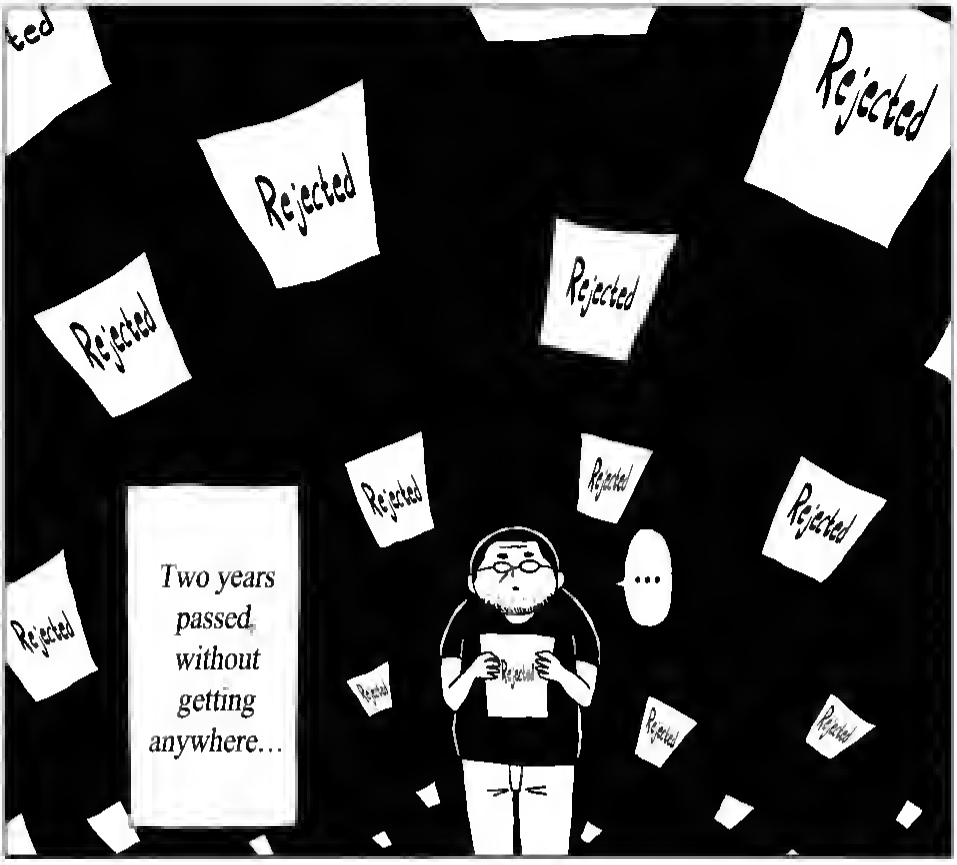
Errata: misspelled words and other typos.

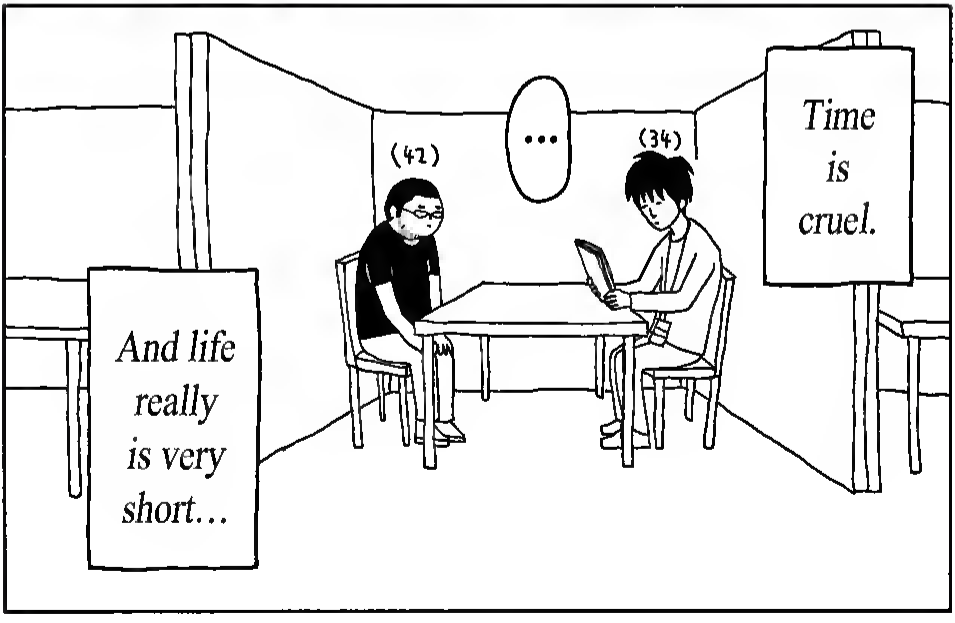

I'd come to think that, if I could only get through the rest of my life like this, without making waves, that would count as being happy...
Don't worry about it.
I was past the age where you could just start your life over, from zero.

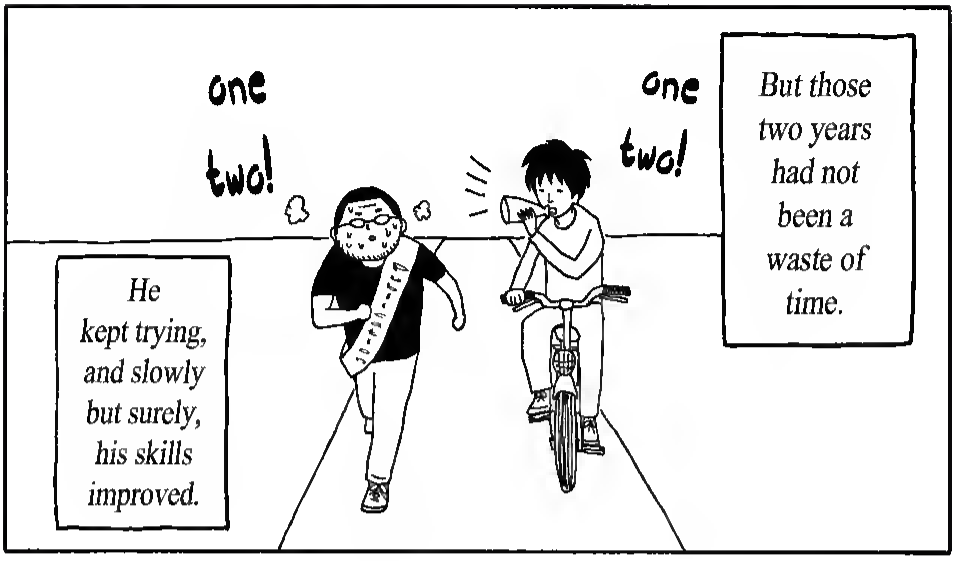

He was 40.
YOU WANT TO SEE HER PICTURE?
Looks like me, eh?
Challenger
And a father.
YOU HAVE A DAUGHTER?
WHAT?
GAR HAR HAR HAR
MOMENTUM!
IT'S ALL ABOUT MOMENTUM, SEE?
And he'd quit his job in the hope of making it as a manga artist...
As I got to know Oguro-san better, little by little...
...I understood why I had felt intrigued by him.

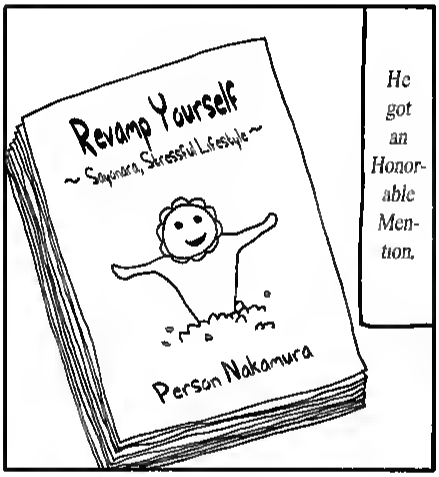

Mfoogh
He was being true to himself.
And I envied him for that...
Challenger
?
HEH HEH ...
But I didn't have the courage to follow his example...

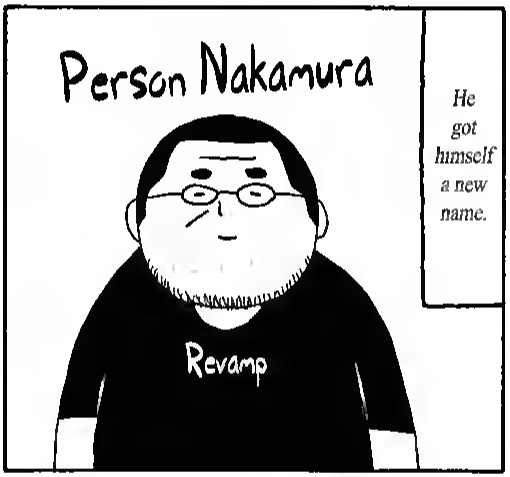

LET'S GET YOU PUBLISHED!
OGURO-SAN.
Smile
INDEED, LET'S!

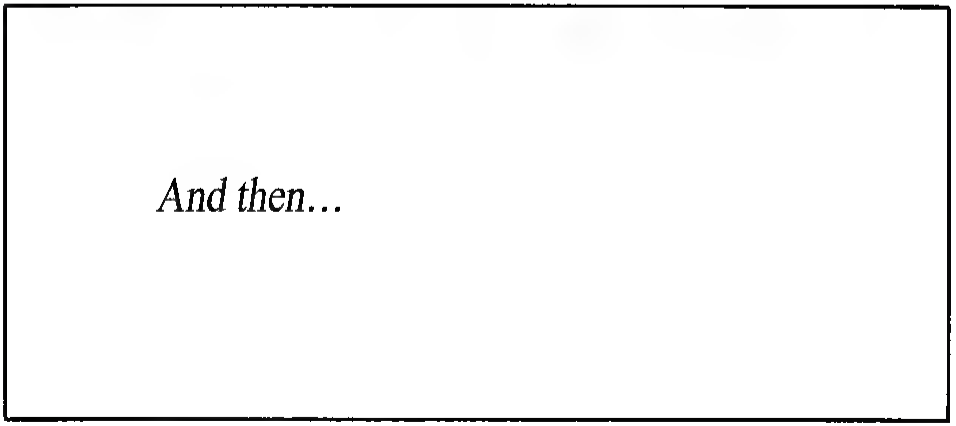

Rejected
Rejected
Rejected
Rejected
Rejected
Rejected
Rejected
Rejected
Rejected
Rejected
Rejected
Two years passed without getting anywhere...
...

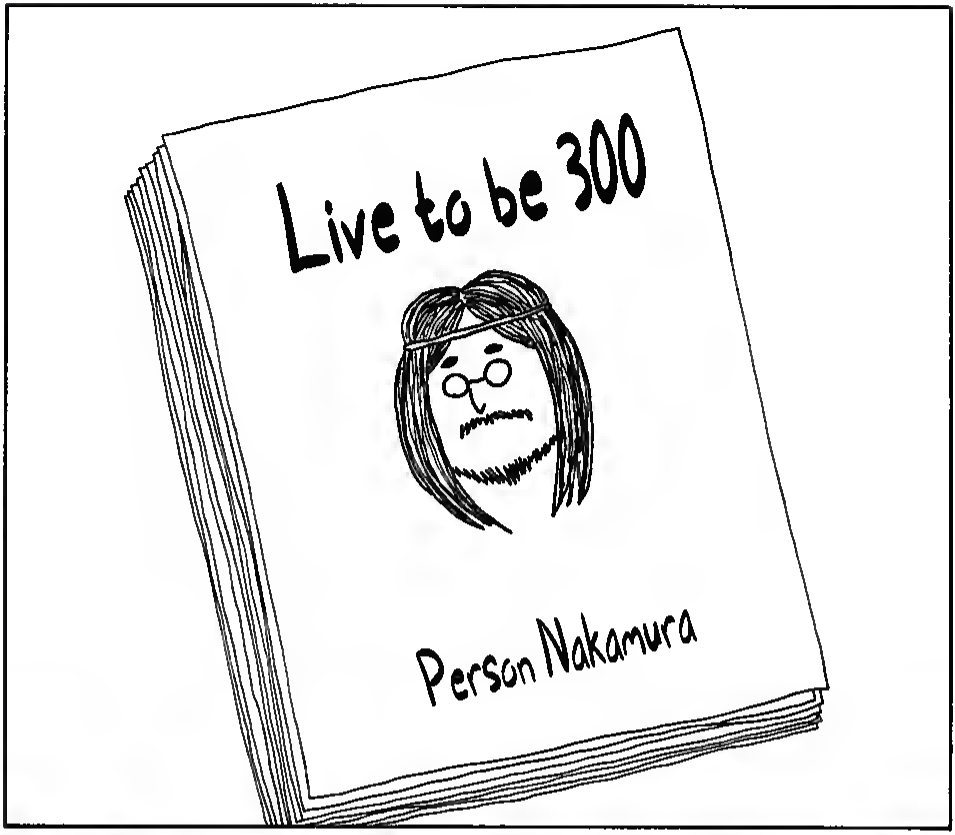

(42)
...
(34)
Time is cruel.
And life really is very short...

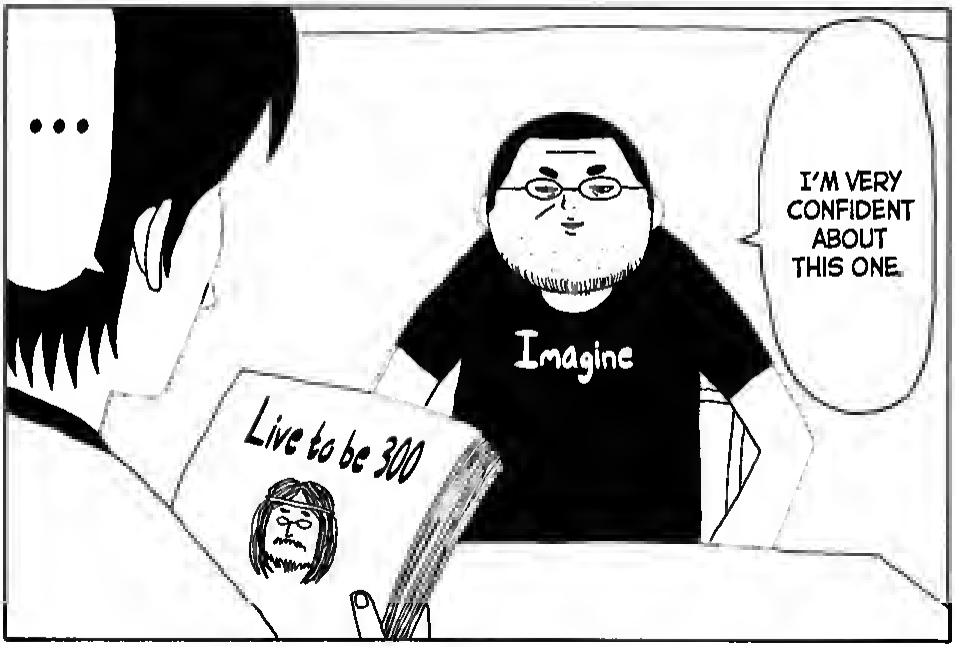

one
two!
one
two!
He kept trying, and slowly but surely, his skills improved.
But those two years had not been a waste of time.

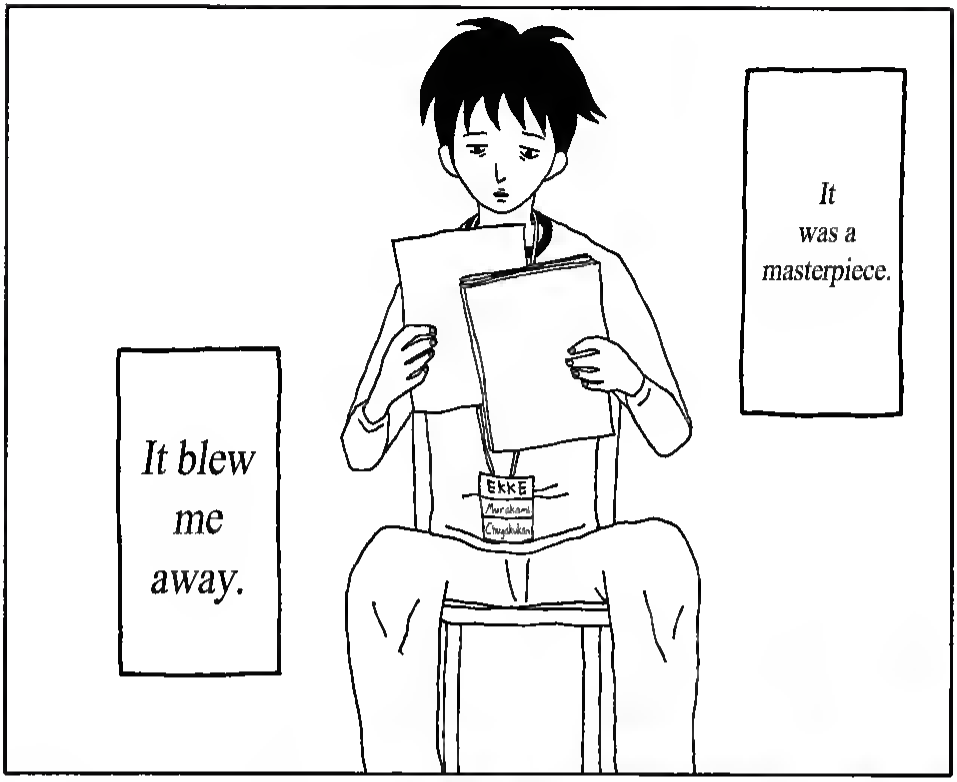

Revamp Yourself
~ Sayonara, Stressful Lifestyle ~
Person Nakamura
He got an Honorable Mention.


Person Nakamura
Revamp
He got himself a new name.

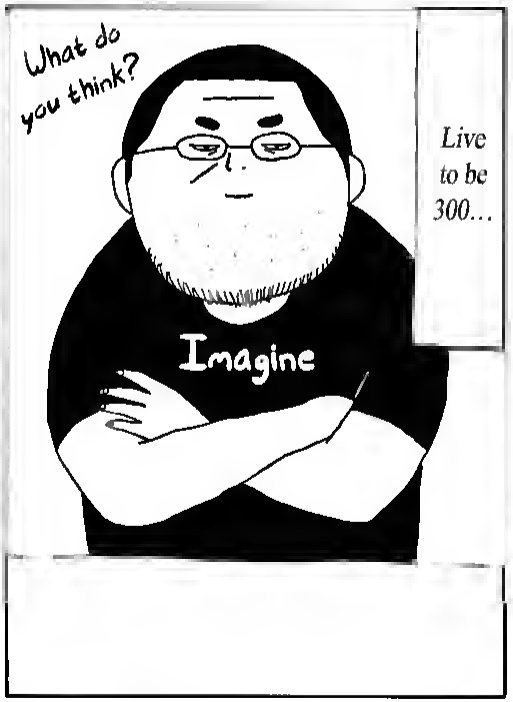

And then...

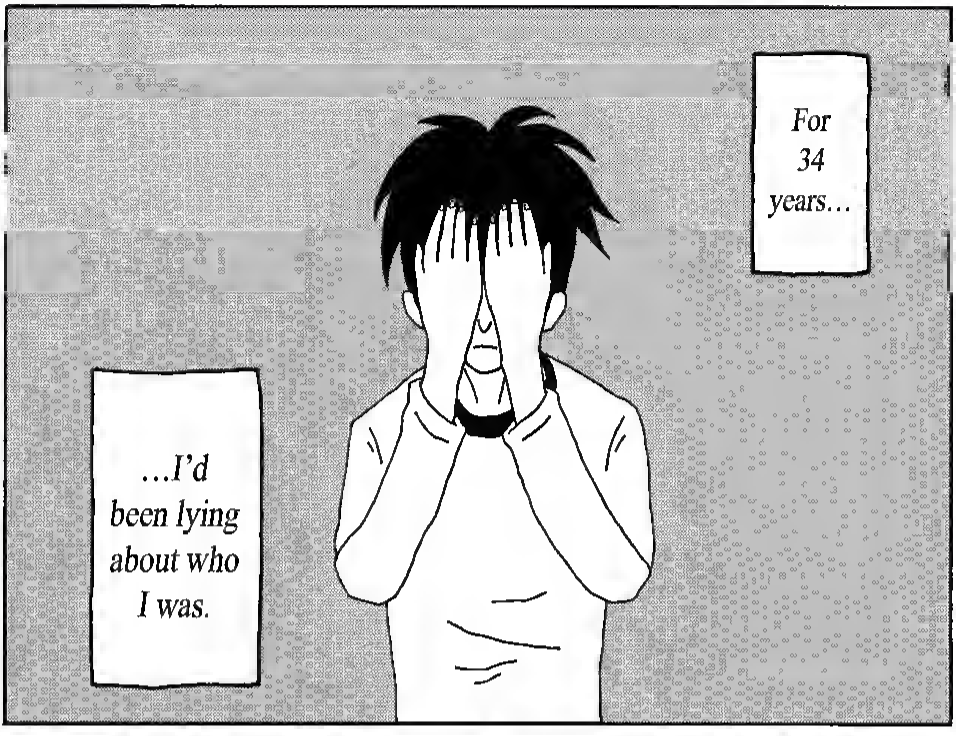

Live to be 300
Person Nakamura


...
Imagine
I'M VERY CONFIDENT ABOUT THIS ONE.
Live to be 300

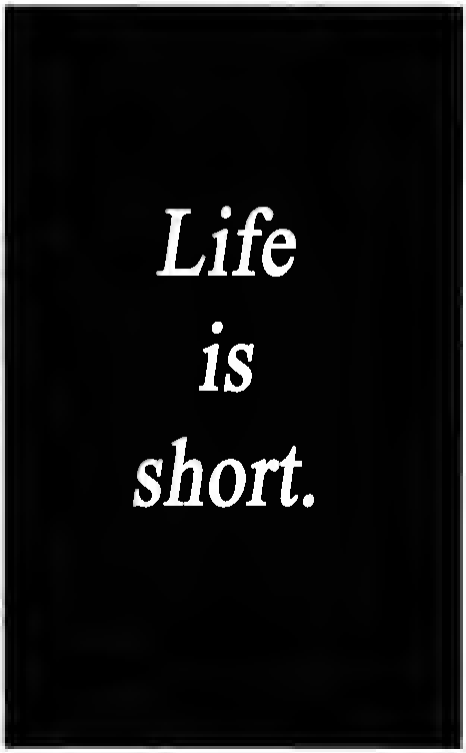

It blew me away.
It was a masterpiece.
EKKE
Murakami
Chuyshikiro

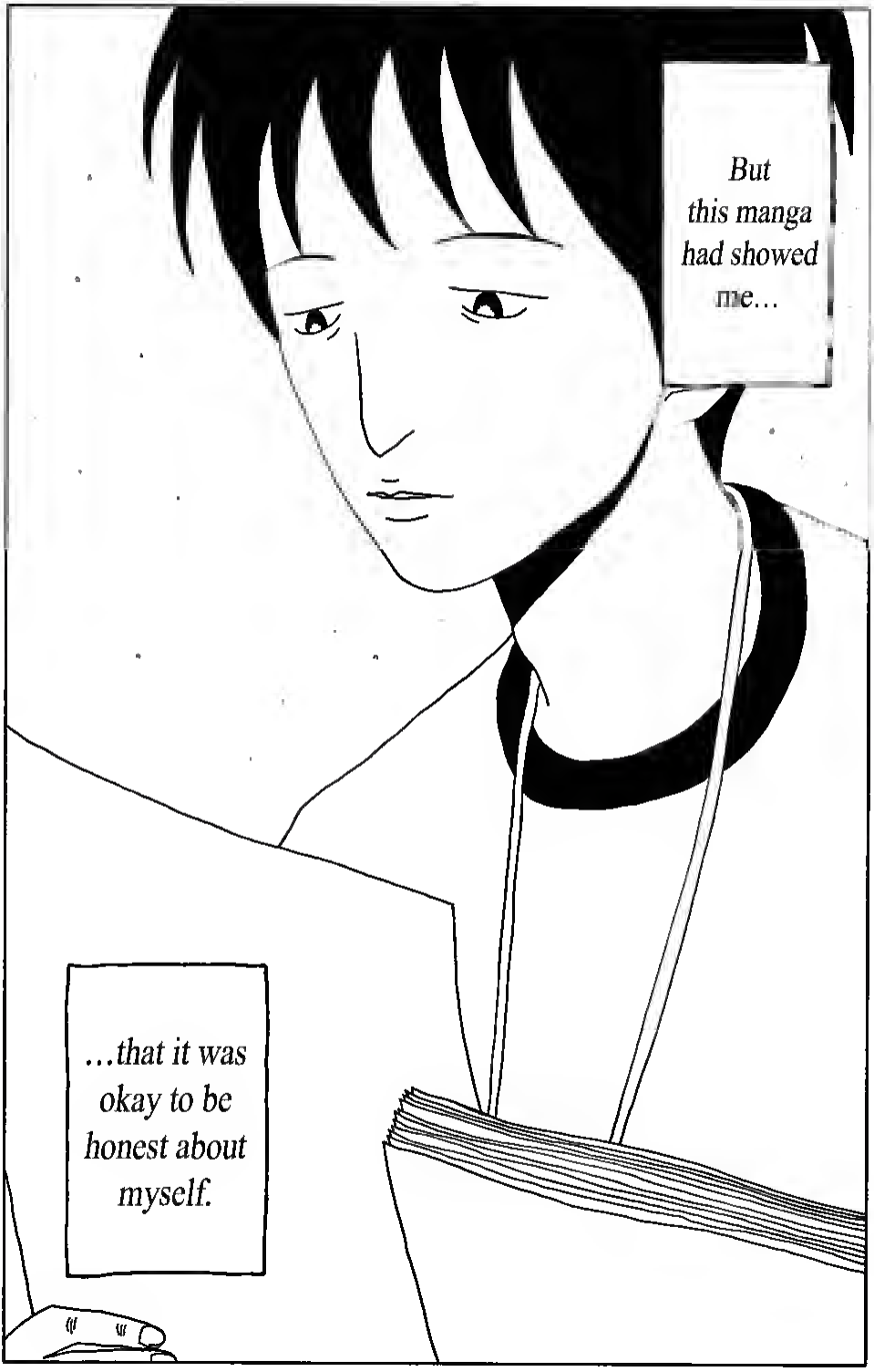
I'd been mis-taken ...
80
Reach adulthood at 80!!
I...

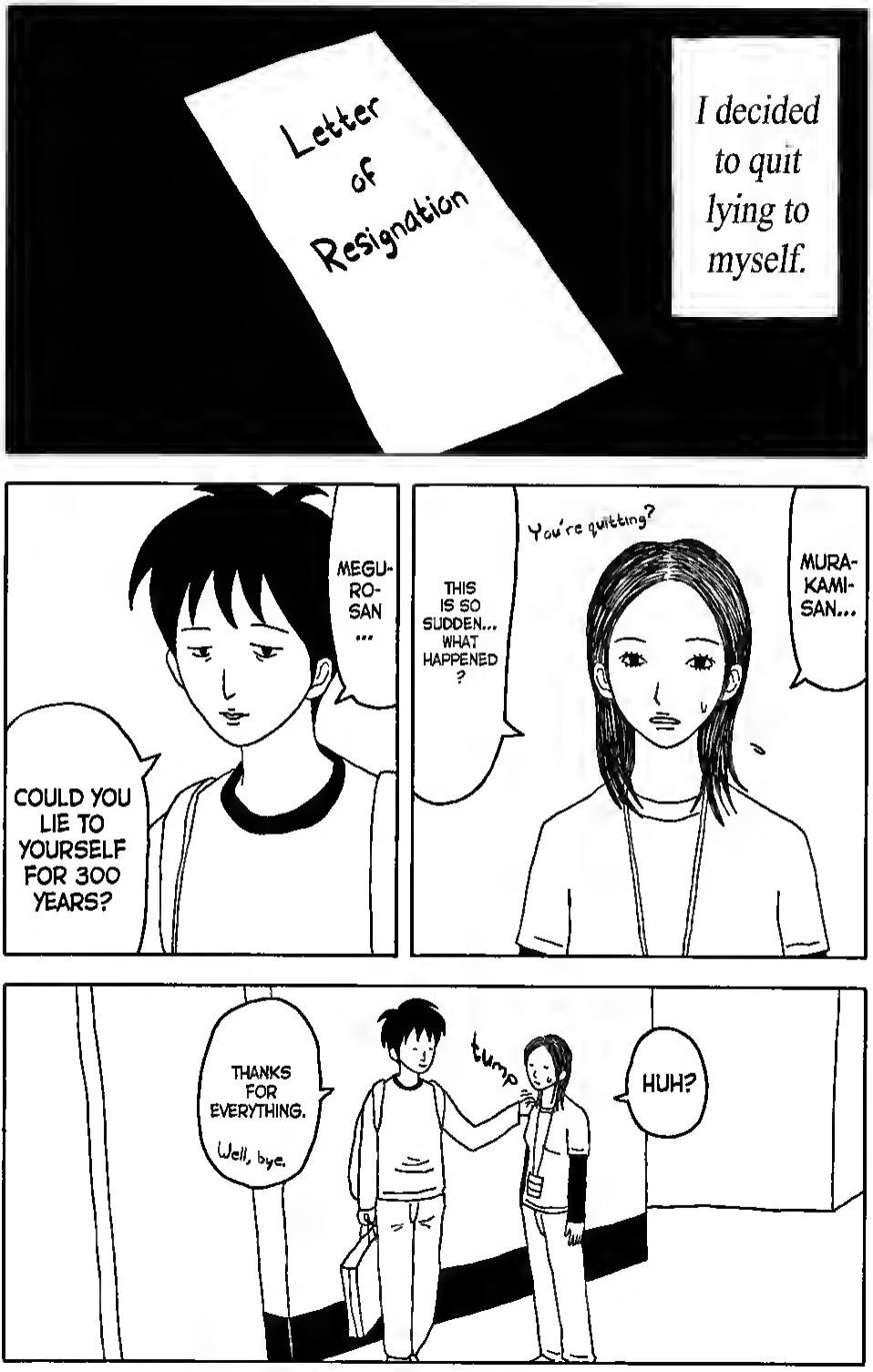

What do you think?
Imagine
Live to be 300...

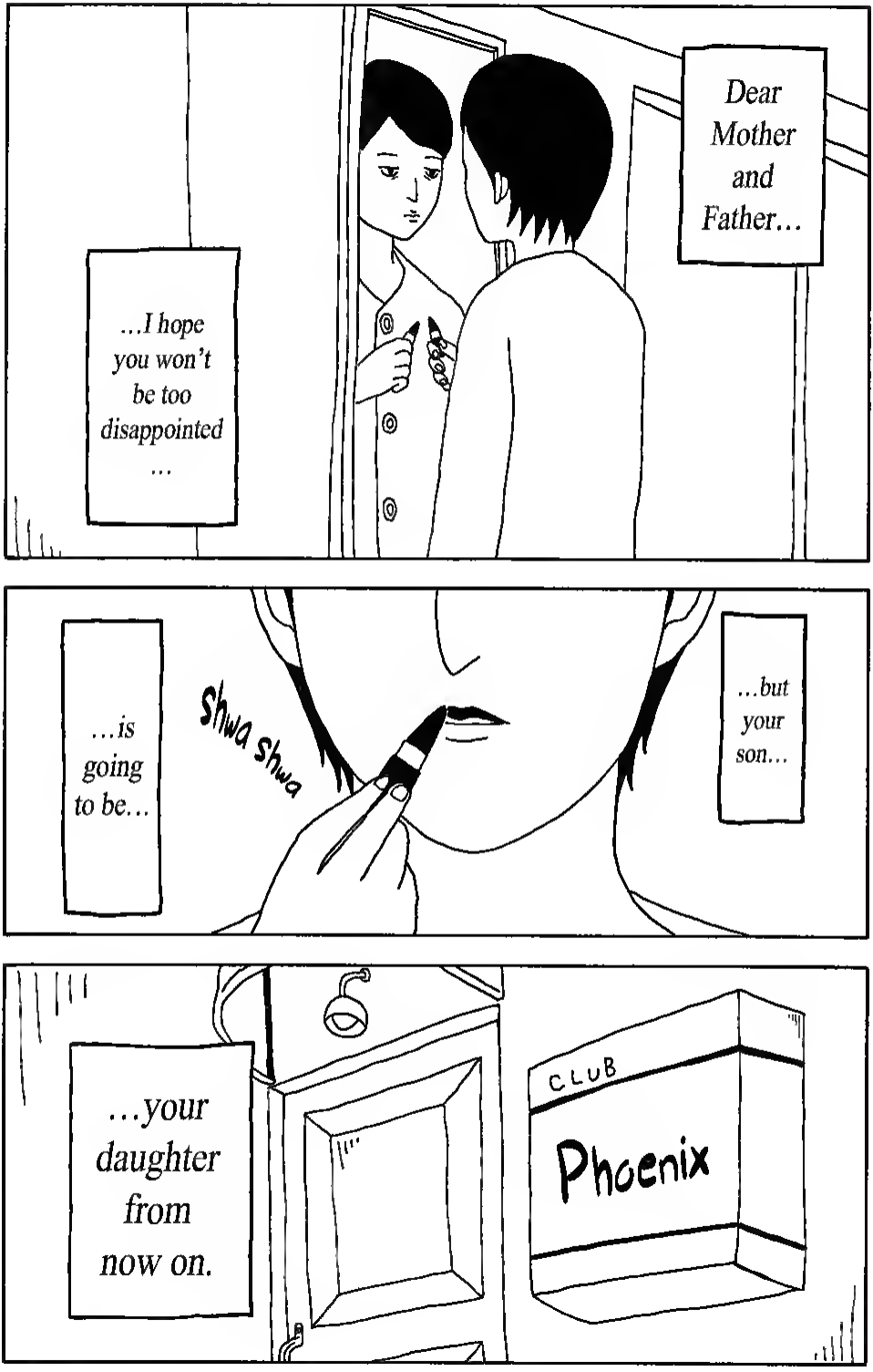

For 34 years…
…I'd been lying about who I was.

I'd told myself that life was too short for that to matter.

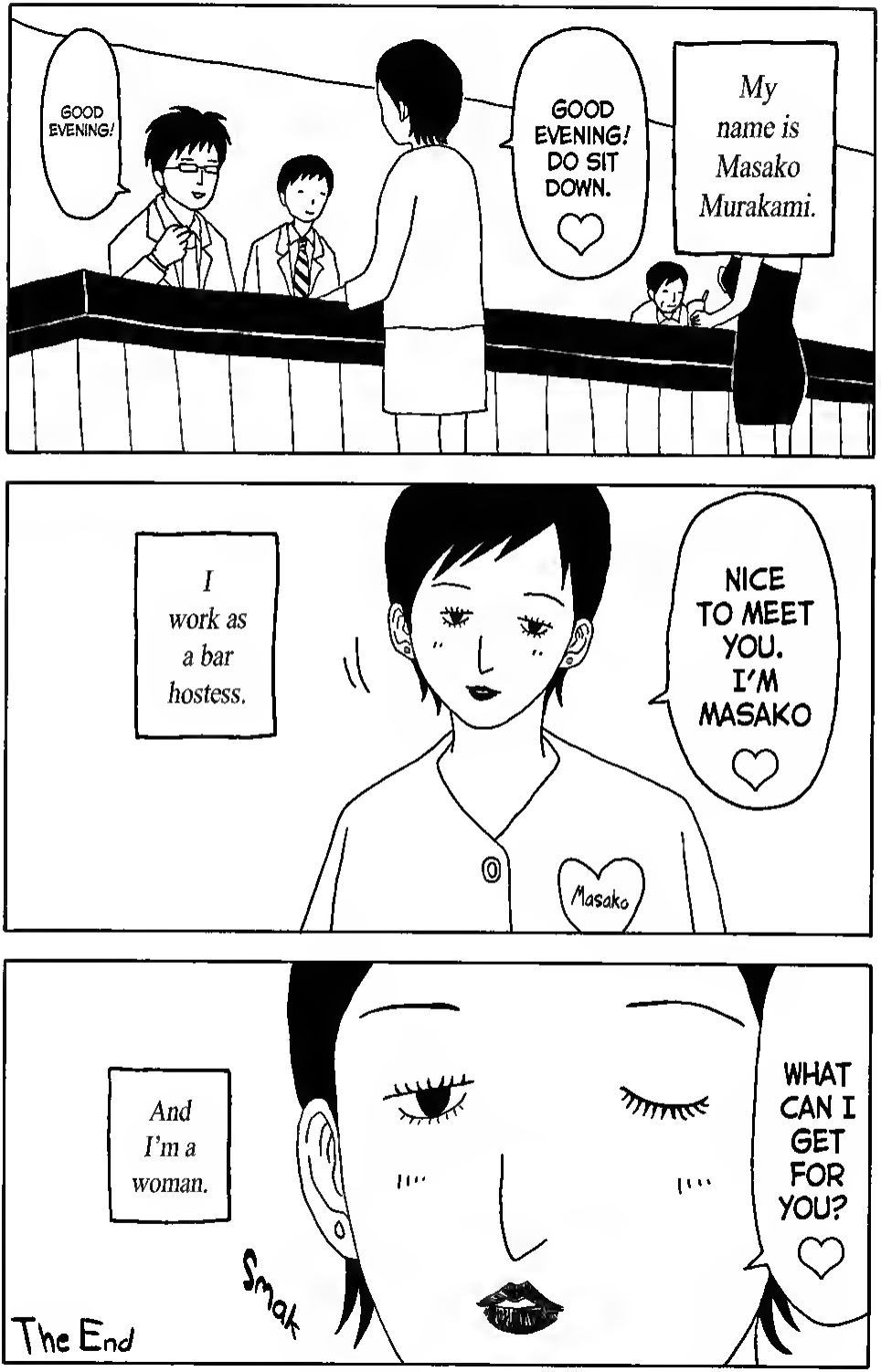

Life is short.


But this manga had showed me...
...that it was okay to be honest about myself.


Letter of Resignation
I decided to quit lying to myself.
MEGU-RO-SAN ...
COULD YOU LIE TO YOURSELF FOR 300 YEARS?
MURA-KAMI-SAN...
You're quitting?
THIS IS SO SUDDEN... WHAT HAPPENED ?
THANKS FOR EVERYTHING.
Well, bye.
tump
HUH?


Dear Mother and Father...
...I hope you won't be too disappointed ...
...but your son...
Shwa shwa
...is going to be...
CLUB
Phoenix
...your daughter from now on.

WELCOME! STEP RIGHT IN...
Masako
Rose


GOOD EVENING!
GOOD EVENING! DO SIT DOWN.
My name is Masako Murakami.
I work as a bar hostess.
NICE TO MEET YOU. I'M MASAKO
Masako
And I'm a woman.
WHAT CAN I GET FOR YOU?
Smak
The End

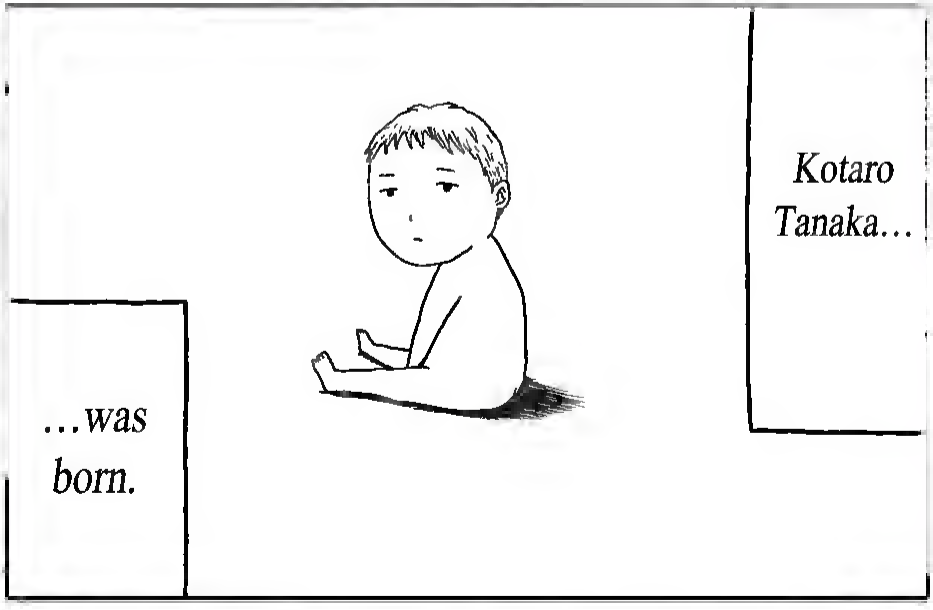
EKKE
Murakami
Chuyakukan

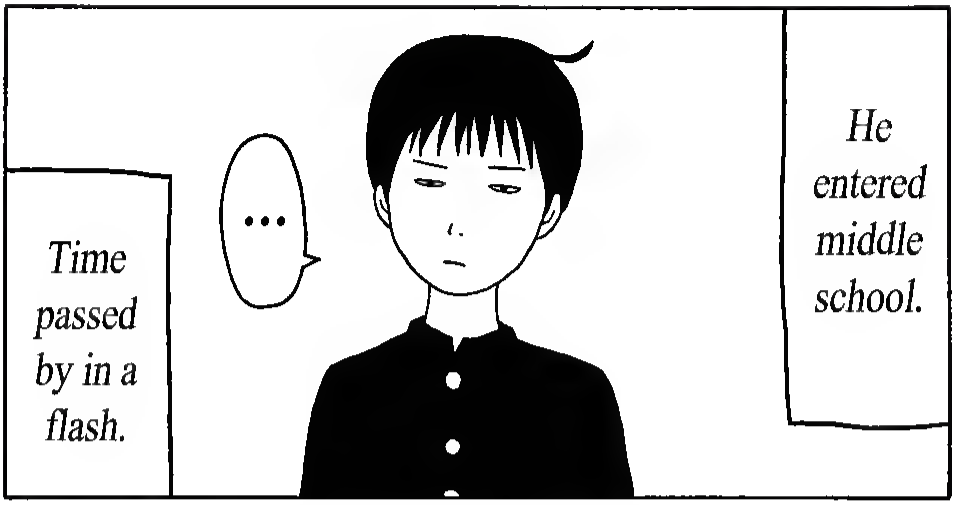
Masako

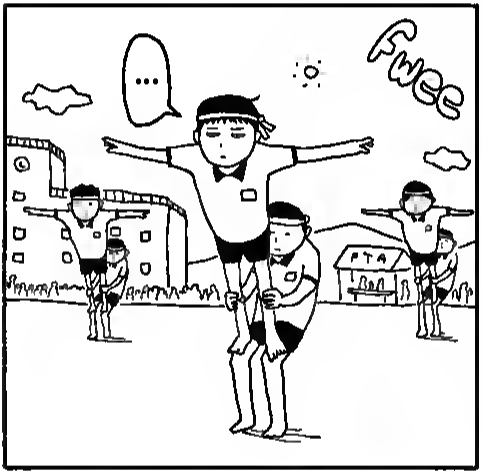
Extra:

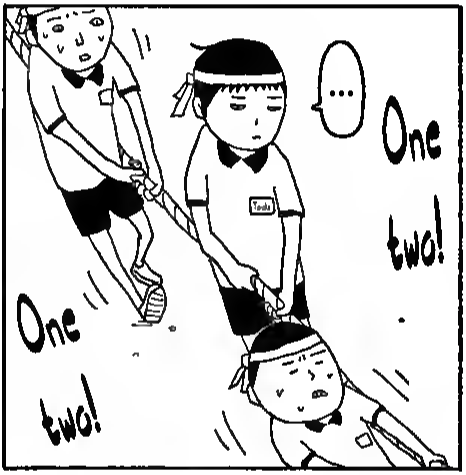
Life of Tanaka

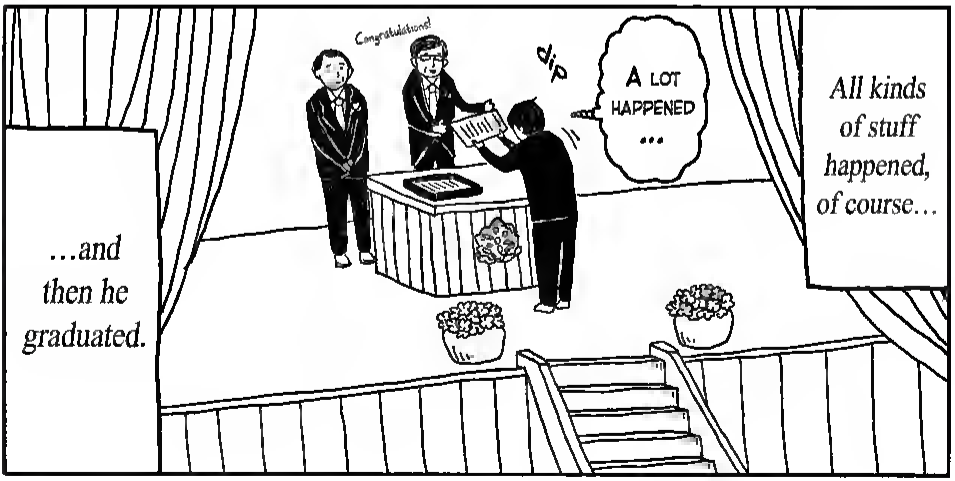
Twenty-odd years ago...




Time passed by in a flash.
...
He entered middle school.


...
Fwee
PTA

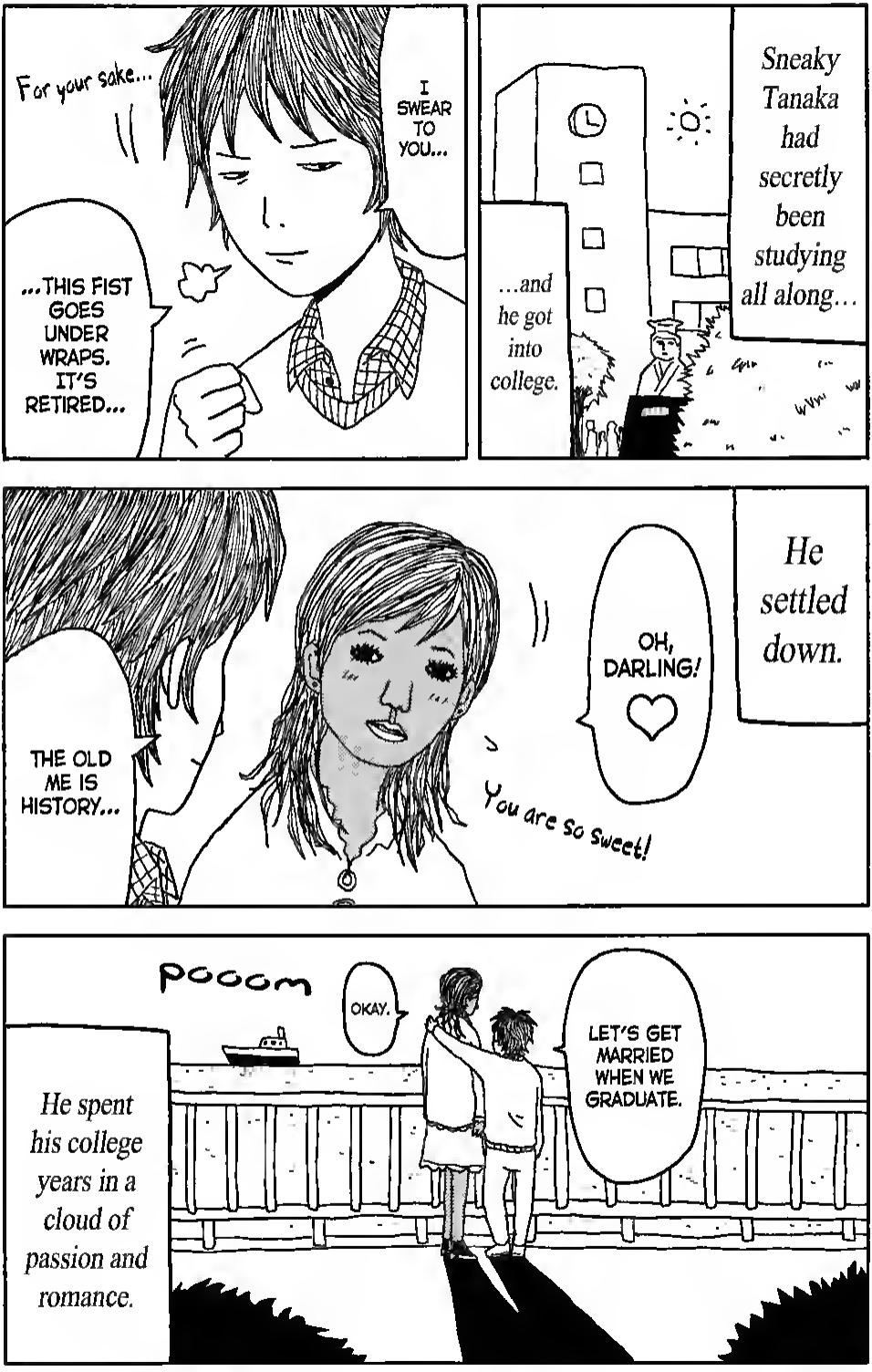

...
One two!
One two!

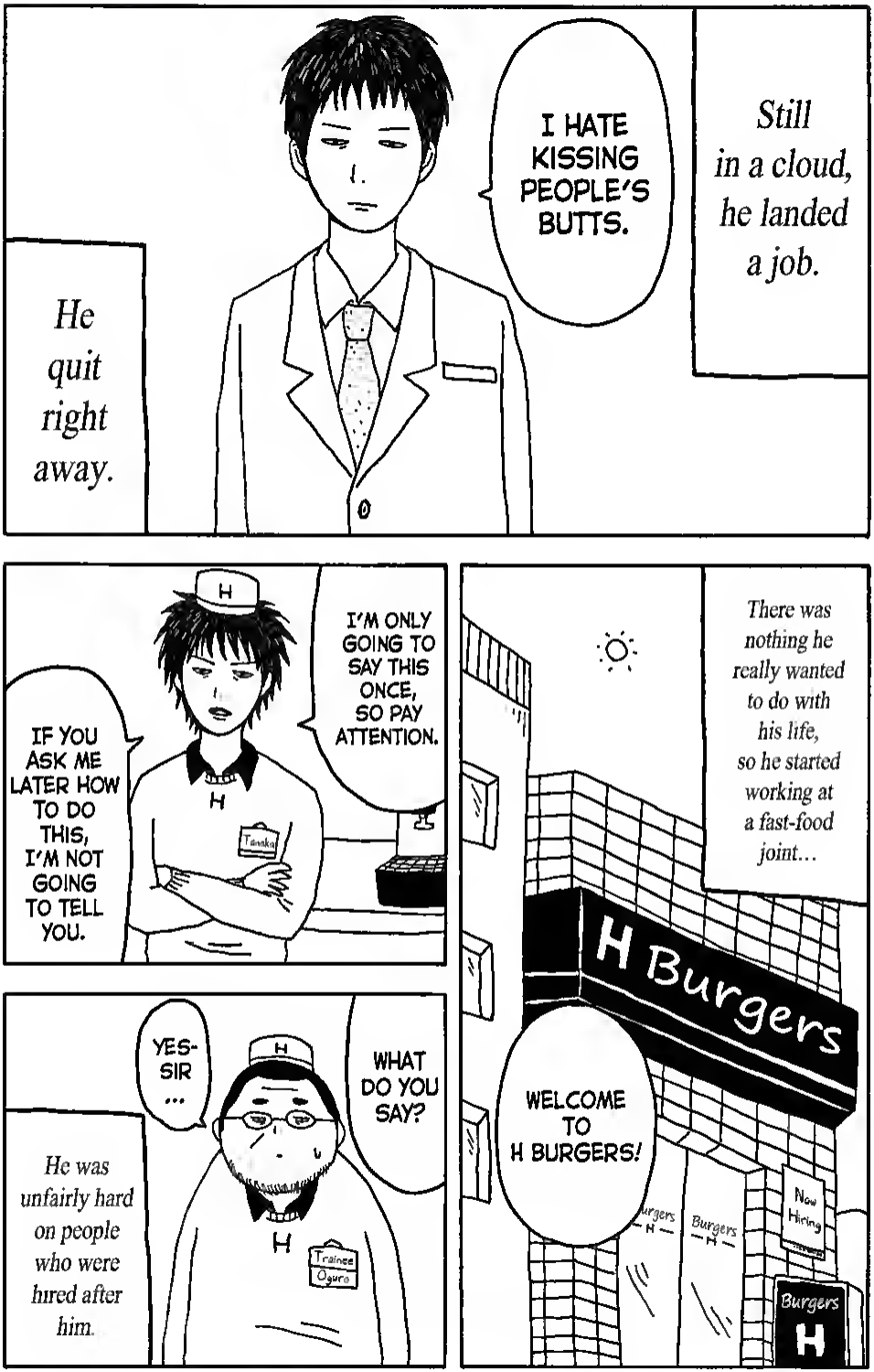

Congratulations!
dip
A LOT HAPPENED ...
All kinds of stuff happened, of course...
...and then he graduated.

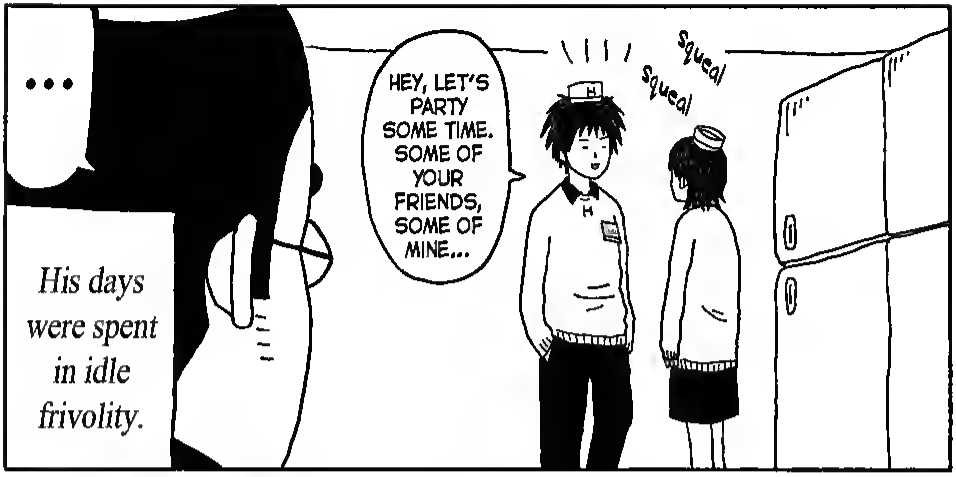
As a high schooler, Tanaka...
YOU SEE THE WAY THAT DUDE WAS LOOKING AT US?
...picked up an attitude and started acting like a tough guy.

I THINK HE NEEDS TO KNOW WHO'S WHO AROUND HERE, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I'M SAYIN'...
WORD...
LET'S THRASH 'IM!
If kids thought you were a wimp, it was over.

Tanaka
THNOK
He talked a lot, but never threw any punches.
...
Because actually, he was really weak.


For your sake...
I SWEAR TO YOU...
...THIS FIST GOES UNDER WRAPS. IT'S RETIRED...
Sneaky Tanaka had secretly been studying all along...
...and he got into college.
He settled down.
OH, DARLING!
You are so sweet!
THE OLD ME IS HISTORY...
He spent his college years in a cloud of passion and romance.
POOOM
OKAY.
LET'S GET MARRIED WHEN WE GRADUATE.

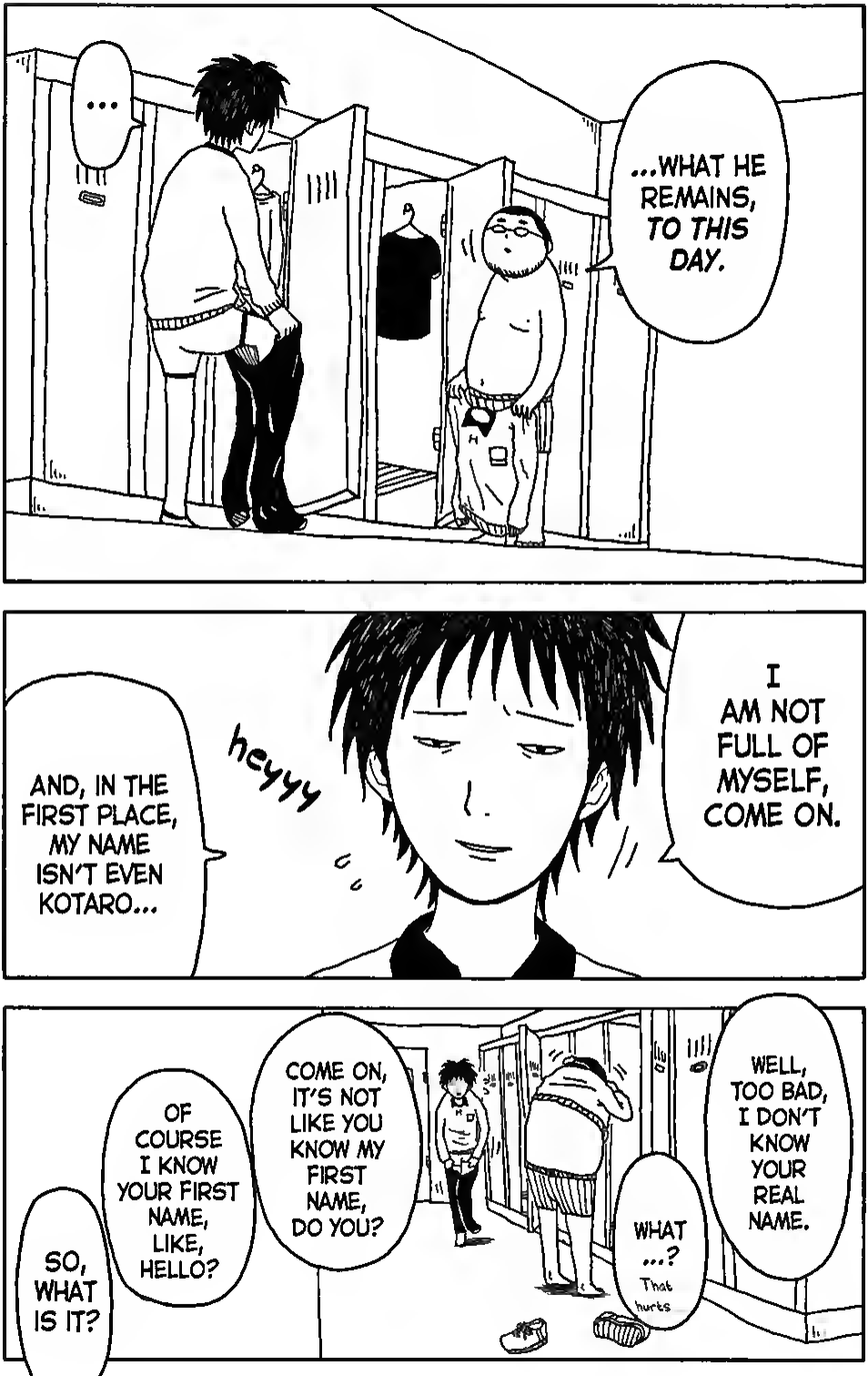

He quit right away.
I HATE KISSING PEOPLE'S BUTTS.
Still in a cloud, he landed a job.
IF YOU ASK ME LATER HOW TO DO THIS, I'M NOT GOING TO TELL YOU.
I'M ONLY GOING TO SAY THIS ONCE, SO PAY ATTENTION.
There was nothing he really wanted to do with his life, so he started working at a fast-food joint...
H Burgers
WELCOME TO H BURGERS!
Now Hiring
Burgers
He was unfairly hard on people who were hired after him.
YES-SIR ...
WHAT DO YOU SAY?

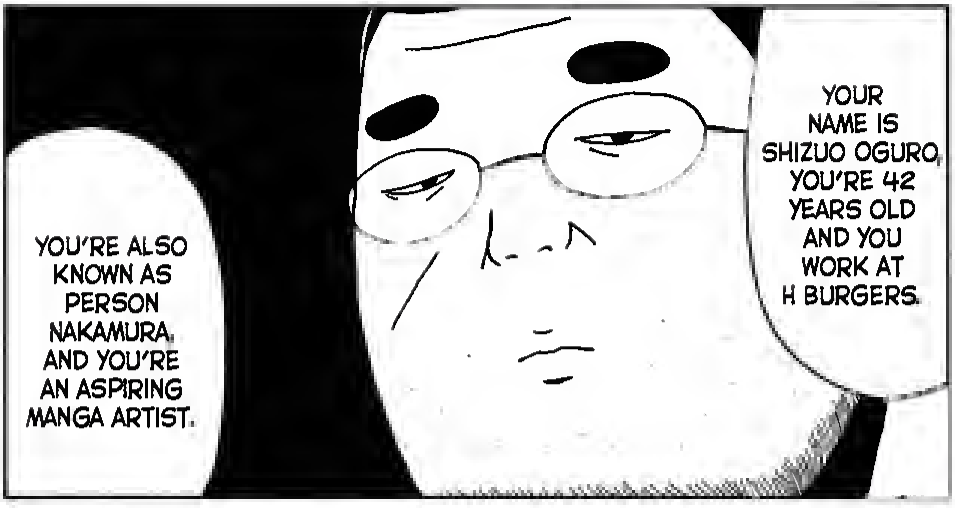

...
His days were spent in idle frivolity.
HEY, LET'S PARTY SOME TIME. SOME OF YOUR FRIENDS, SOME OF MINE...
Squeal
Squeal

THE ONLY KIND OF SUSHI I CAN EAT IS SEA URCHIN.
Occasionally he'd let slip a hint of his spoiled, pampered childhood...
Tanaka

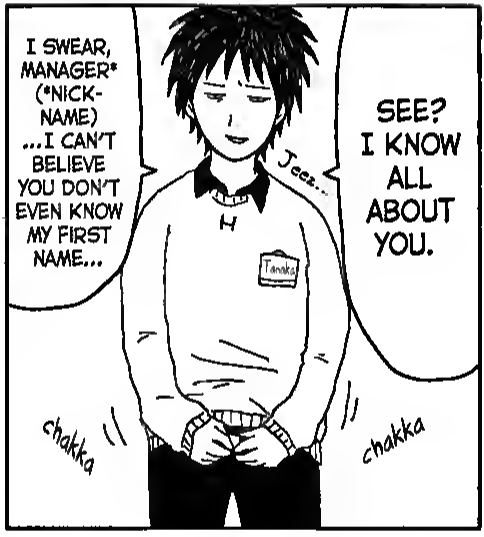
I'M JUST NOT THAT INTO IT TODAY, FOR SOME REASON ...
Out of it...
WHAT'RE YOU DOING, JEEZ...
Work, dude...

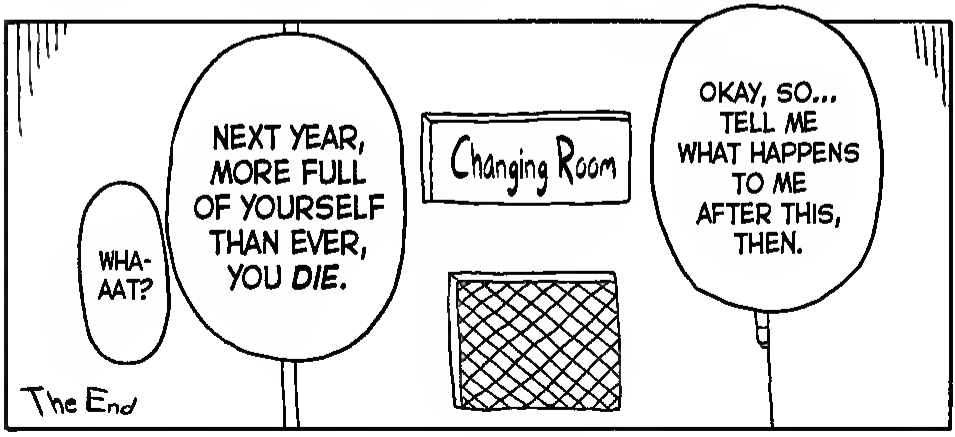
...Kotaro Tanaka got to be totally full of himself, which is...
Ha ha ha ha ha!
I'M SO GREAT!
Sub-Leader
Promoted to Team Leader solely because he had worked there the longest...


...
...WHAT HE REMAINS, TO THIS DAY.
I AM NOT FULL OF MYSELF, COME ON.
heyyy
AND, IN THE FIRST PLACE, MY NAME ISN'T EVEN KOTARO...
WELL, TOO BAD, I DON'T KNOW YOUR REAL NAME.
WHAT ...?
That hurts
COME ON, IT'S NOT LIKE YOU KNOW MY FIRST NAME, DO YOU?
OF COURSE I KNOW YOUR FIRST NAME, LIKE, HELLO?
SO, WHAT IS IT?


YOUR NAME IS SHIZUO OGURO. YOU'RE 42 YEARS OLD AND YOU WORK AT H BURGERS.
YOU'RE ALSO KNOWN AS PERSON NAKAMURA. AND YOU'RE AN ASPIRING MANGA ARTIST.

So I GUESSED RIGHT...
WAIT, SO HOW COME YOU KNEW ALL THAT OTHER STUFF?
Did I ever tell you?
I KNOW EVERYTHING THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT YOU, TANAKA MY BOY...
H
Oguro


I SWEAR, MANAGER* (*NICK-NAME) ...I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW MY FIRST NAME...
Jeez...
SEE? I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOU.
H
Tanaka
chakka
chakka


WHA-AAT?
NEXT YEAR, MORE FULL OF YOURSELF THAN EVER, YOU DIE.
Changing Room
OKAY, SO... TELL ME WHAT HAPPENS TO ME AFTER THIS, THEN.
The End

H
Take some notes!
Are you taking notes?
H
Tanaka

I'LL GIVE IT MY ALL... TOMORROW

Volume 3

VIZ Signature Edition

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